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THE election is proving even worse than we feared. Mr. Snowden has led the way in an extraordinary campaign of personal bitterness which has disgusted fair-minded people of all parties. And what is the elector to make of it when Mr. Snowden and Mr. MacDonald put up the pretence that a return of the National Government does not necessarily mean the introduction of tariffs? Mr. Chamberlain, the effective Conservative leader, immediately repudiated the suggestion that this election would not give the Tories a free hand for tariffs, and Mr. Snowden now says that there is no difference on this point between him and Mr. Chamberlain. Every Tory platform in the country is ringing with the tariff cry and Mr. Baldwin exactly stated the position when he said that tariffs were still "the one weapon" the Tories offered for dealing with the situation, and that "the character of the National Government must be largely determined by us Conservatives because of the size of the Party."

* * *

Just how long Mr. MacDonald will last as Premier if the National Government wins the sweeping victory it expects, no one knows. We have heard bets offered that he would not be able to remain for a month. This is surely an exaggeration. Would it be wise to take the nest egg out of the nest before the chickens were hatched? But, however that may be, it is obviously useless for either Liberals or Labour supporters to hope that a National Government success would mean anything very different from a purely Conservative success. It means tariffs, the reduction of the social services and a number of economies on salaries and local expenditure which would be the falsest of false economy. When Sir Herbert Samuel heard that he was to be opposed by a Conservative at Darwen he is reported to have said that he had "not expected the Tories to shoot their prisoners." That is exactly the position. Prisoners doomed to elimination we all know Mr. MacDonald and the Liberals to be unless they toe the line on tariffs. What is the use of the prisoners talking about what they will do with their executioners?

* * *

1,286 candidates were nominated last week. Of these about 700 (as far as can be ascertained) claim to be supporters of the "National" Government, which consists of four parties—Conservatives, National Liberals, Liberal Nationals, and the National Labour Party. A "National Party"—membership and policy unknown—has also been exclusively announced in the *Times*. 69 members have been returned without a contest, of whom all but six are "National" supporters. For the rest, there will be 409 straight fights, as compared

with 102 in 1929—an indication, on the one hand, of the extent to which pact-making has gone forward; on the other, of the depletion of party funds. Interest in the election is naturally being focussed upon certain constituencies. The Prime Minister has next to no chance at Seaham Harbour; and Sir Herbert Samuel is struggling very hard at Darwen, where the Tories are attacking him with a concentrated virulence that bodes ill for "National" harmony. Even Lord Beaverbrook has been summoned from the vasty deep to speak against him. Mr. Thomas is in danger at Derby, while Mr. Henderson at Burnley is confronted with the redoubtable Admiral Gordon Campbell, who signalised his entry into the constituency with the refined remark that "he was there to give politics the hell of a kick in the pants." Another Minister who may not be returned is Sir William Jowitt, who has abandoned Preston for the Combined Universities. His competitors (for two seats) include Miss Rathbone, Mr. Harold Nicholson, and the luckless Mr. H. G. Williams. Other interesting candidates are Mr. Edgar Wallace, who is wooing the Blackpool electors as an out-and-out Free Trade candidate, Kid Lewis, who stands in the Mosley interest in Whitechapel, and Sir Oswald himself, brandishing chair legs in the Midlands.

* * *

In 313 constituencies there is a straight fight between Tory and Labour. The perplexity of Liberals who, in spite of the nominal adhesion of their leaders to the "National" Government, see tariffs everywhere put forward as the programme of the Government they support can well be imagined. In the hope of clarifying the situation, Liberal headquarters has designed a questionnaire for candidates, intended on the one hand to elicit the candidate's views on tariffs (and in particular the interpretation he puts on his present "mandate") and, on the other, his attitude towards national finance, the dole, and the socialisation of the banks. The majority of Liberals are unwilling to vote for Protection and want a great many more particulars before they are willing to support a proposal to nationalise the banking system. Candidates who put up a good show on their questionnaire—who undertake to support neither a permanent system of tariffs nor alterations in banking policy without an explicit mandate from the electorate—are likely, however, to receive a good proportion of Liberal votes. But the gap between "official" Liberalism and "official" Labour is a difficult one to bridge, and we may expect many Liberal abstentions.

* * *

The news about the Manchurian dispute, as we write, is very serious. Earlier in the week it looked as if the patience and persistence of the League Council were bearing fruit. The Japanese after much protesting had withdrawn their opposition to an American representative being joined with the Council, and they had stated more or less definitely the terms on which they would withdraw their troops. They do not, they say, want any annexation of territory; they do want guarantees against the molestation of Japanese subjects in Manchuria, the honouring of treaty rights there, and a calling-off of the boycott and other anti-Japanese activities everywhere. These terms may be reasonable in themselves, but the trouble is that the Chinese still refuse direct discussion with Japan, and Japan will have nothing else. The position of the League—in whose hands China has put her case—has been exceedingly awkward. There were practical difficulties in trying to press the Covenant against Japan, and the whole weight of world opinion was behind the mediatory efforts of M. Briand and his colleagues. But now it seems that these efforts are to be relaxed. The Council requests Japan to withdraw her troops and China to begin negotiations, and itself adjourns for three weeks to watch the result. This looks deplorably like a confession of failure. By the Chinese it will certainly be regarded as a betrayal, by the Japanese as a victory for the "strong hand." It may mean war, and a blow to the prestige of the League, the consequences of which will be world wide.

* * *

It is with the faintest of faint hopes that the world awaits the meeting of M. Laval and President Hoover. There have been rumours galore of generous or common-sense gestures on the part of the one or the other; but every such rumour is brought down with a bang directly it gets on the wing. Whatever Mr. Hoover himself may desire in the way of cancelling or scaling down debts, he has no united public opinion behind him. America in any case is not prepared to give up her claims on Europe without a guarantee on the European side of some reduction of armaments. And France is not going to give any such guarantee without more guarantees from other people of her "security." A deadlock on this point would not necessarily rule out some agreement on measures for preventing the collapse of Germany a few months hence. But here again there does not seem to be any common mind. Mr. Hoover's idea, it is said, does not go beyond renewing the moratorium, whilst the French would like an arrangement that would clear up a part of the mess, at least, for good. Apart from these questions, there is the more immediate problem that faces the United States. The French dredger is now busy sucking gold out of New York, and the drain has become so heavy as to threaten to force America off the gold standard. That the Americans, or most of them, are hoping to avoid, and they look for some encouragement from M. Laval. Meanwhile they have refused the French demand that they should raise their interest-rate on short-term balances.

* * *

There is every reason to anticipate that the Round Table Conference will be brought to an end in November. Mr. Gandhi made his sharp attack on the Government at Birmingham after an exchange of letters with the Prime Minister upon the Minorities question. The Mahatma's view is that the Government has altered its position in such a way as to make agreement impossible. The non-Moslem minorities, on the other hand, complain that Mr. Gandhi's practice of identifying the National Congress with the whole of Hindu India involves the sacrifice of their interests to those of the Moslems. The Conference during the past week has been grappling also with the problem of federal finance. The report of Lord Peel's sub-committee was practically unanimous, but it was opposed in full committee, especially as regards the conditions under which the

Indian States could enter an All-India Federation. It would be reasonable to assume that the finance problem can be advanced by the proposed expert committee in India, but it is obvious that a basis of agreement on minorities must be reached in London unless the Conference is to be a humiliating failure. In the atmosphere after the election there should be one chance left of averting disaster.

* * *

The Free State Government has made its first move under the new Public Safety Act. Twelve organisations have been proclaimed illegal, and a tribunal of five officers, with powers of life and death, has been set up to try offenders. The banned organisations range from the Irish Republican Army to the Women Prisoners' Defence League, from the Workers' Research Bureau to the Friends of Soviet Russia. Most of these bodies, so far as we can judge, have no specific grievances to be remedied; their adherents are in general disgruntled relics of the bad old days, or equally wild enthusiasts for the good days that will come under the red instead of the green flag. The prompt action of the Government has, according to the first reports, given the gunmen a shock; weapons have been surrendered or thrown away, and there is an exodus of members from the organisations. We hope that the whole of this fantastic terrorist movement will now peter out. It is easy to sympathise with those who opposed the passing of a law which puts such immense power in the hands of the executive. But the situation had become intolerable, and some more effective way of killing the cat was wanted than choking it with cream. Mr. Cosgrave's Government, if it is wise, will not strain its powers too far; and even if it is not wise, it should be restrained by fear of the consequences—for it is an Irish and not, thank heaven! an English Government.

* * *

The Federal Farm Board is to hold 7,000,000 bales of American cotton off the market—by far the largest hold-over in the history of the trade. This is to be done in the hope of maintaining prices on a falling market, and of persuading the growers to restrict the area under cultivation next year. But if the cotton-growers are not to grow cotton, what are they to do? They must not grow wheat; for of that too the Farm Board is holding an enormous surplus off the market. Nor is there any other crop to which they can turn in the hope of selling their produce at a remunerative price. Presumably they will have to take largely to subsistence agriculture, and live off the produce of their farms until better times return. But will better times return, and if so when? And can the farmer live by eating his own produce, and at the same time keep up his payments to the banks and his other creditors? Carrying over stocks is a good enough policy for meeting a purely temporary glut; but the American farmer is already at his wits' end to carry on at all, and in no position to make sacrifices now in the hope of a future prosperity to which no man can put a date. All these attempts to keep up prices by accumulating stocks, in effect, only aggravate the problem. They are useless, unless measures are also taken to bring the depression to an end. But America still clings desperately to such expedients, in face of the inability of her rulers and capitalists to think out any more constructive policy. Nor is British business in a position to throw stones; for it is still thinking mainly along the same lines.

* * *

The list of countries that are off the gold standard grows apace. Canada is this week's latest recruit; and we may quite soon find that South Africa, whence most of the world's new gold comes, has been driven off as well by the threat to her export trade. Joint action between Great Britain and the Dominions is coming to look more possible every day. Meanwhile, the United States have ceased to suck up gold, and are disgorging it fast. But the maldistribution of the world's supply is not thereby diminished; for France and, to a less degree, Holland, Switzerland and Belgium, are taking all, and more than all, that America yields up. The gold standard has ceased to be an effective international standard, or to act as a stabilising influence on world finance. It is of vital importance that we should keep the depreciation of sterling within reasonable limits; but it is fully as important that there should be no rush back to the gold standard, even on a basis of devaluation, at least until guarantees have been secured for its better working in future.

* * *

The newspapers have provided plenty of fun during the campaign. The *Manchester Guardian* has once again shown itself an invaluable organ of honest and reasonable opinion. The ordinary Tory papers—amongst which we regret to say the *Times*, which has completely lost any objectivity of outlook, must now be reckoned—are full of wild abuse of Labour. The *Express* and *Evening Standard* are very sure that victory for the National Government means victory for Lord Beaverbrook, and we are by no means sure that they are wrong. The *News Chronicle*, having an impossible electoral position to hold, since it vaguely supports the National Government while remaining enthusiastically Free Trade, concentrates its energies upon a very effective anti-tariff campaign. The *Daily Herald*, though not more scrupulous than its opponents in its propaganda, has for the first time become an important political paper. For reckless and malicious propaganda we have seen nothing to equal the *Daily Mirror* of Monday, October 19th. Its front page, headed "Bolshevism Run Mad," illustrated Mr. Snowden's indefensible phrase by a picture of a square in Petrograd strewn with corpses shot down apparently by Bolshevik machine guns in 1917. The inference is that London streets would present a similar horrifying spectacle if Labour were returned to power. Fortunately, the idea of Mr. Henderson, Mr. Clynes and Mr. William Graham as the men behind the machine guns must seem ludicrous even to the ignorant electors who prefer to "read" the picture paper.

* * *

A large number of entries for the prizes offered in connection with our University Supplement have already been received. May we again remind those still intending to enter that contributions should reach this office not later than November 2nd? Full details were given in our issue of October 10th. We hope to publish the Supplement before the end of November.

SNOWDENISM RUN MAD

POLITICS are notoriously a dirty business. But in this country we have usually preserved certain decencies. Personal vindictiveness has not been encouraged, and there has at least been a polite convention that one did not stab one's friends in the back. We believe, therefore, that Mr. Snowden's unbalanced and envenomed utterances are likely to damage rather than forward the cause of the National Government. We have indeed heard even from its strong supporters nothing but regret and indignation that the man who is more than any other responsible for our present situation should turn and rend the colleagues whom he had led into disaster; that the politician who has been known for a generation as one of the foremost exponents of Socialism in this country should now describe the very proposals which he sponsored (and of which he was, indeed, one of the authors) as "Bolshevism Run Mad"; that the economist who has stood as the sternest and least repentant of Free Traders should now stake his reputation in support of a Government whose return must mean high protective tariffs and the destruction of all that his reputation rests upon.

What, in the first place, are we to make of Mr. Snowden's present attitude to tariffs? In his wireless address he contemptuously rejected the Labour Party's claim to be an anti-tariff party. It is true, of course, that his late colleagues did not share Mr. Snowden's fanaticism on this subject—a fanaticism which we have accepted until now as the fruit of genuine conviction. Many members of the Labour Government believe in the extension of State control over imports, and a majority of them, when pressed during the crisis in August with a Budget deficit to face and a trade balance running heavily against us, were prepared, just as Liberal leaders were then prepared, to consider an emergency tariff. It was one of the possible means of getting out of the mess into which Mr. Snowden's financial methods had brought the country. But now that we have gone off the gold standard the emergency case for tariffs has disappeared and the Labour Party is opposed to Protection just as ardently—and just as consistently—as the Liberal Party. Meanwhile Mr. Snowden himself has thrown in his lot with a Government whose policy is doubtful in all but one respect—that it will impose tariffs. His pretence that the Tories, if returned as the predominating influence of a National Government (as they must be if the National Government is returned at all), would not be able to introduce tariffs without a further mandate from the electorate has been promptly repudiated by Mr. Chamberlain and by Conservative candidates all over the country. And Mr. Snowden, as if to show that he is after all more dupe than ringleader, calmly states that there is no difference on this matter of "a free hand" between himself and Mr. Chamberlain! Mr. Snowden has, in short, rounded off his Free Trade career by supporting a protectionist ramp, pretending first that it was not protectionist and then, in effect, admitting that it was.

There was no hint in Mr. Snowden's broadcast of his own responsibility for the crisis. Ever since the Labour Government came into power with an avowed policy of giving work to the unemployed Mr. Snowden has been the stumbling block—even a greater stumbling block than Mr. Thomas. A fanatical adherent of what is called the "Treasury view," he used his key position as Chancellor to negative every proposal advanced by his colleagues and by his economic advisers. When the Labour Government came into office there was a real opportunity of co-operation with the Liberals for dealing with the problem of unemployment: that co-operation failed, not because the Labour Party was more socialistic than the Liberal, but because the policy of national development, equally sponsored by both parties at the election, was strangled at its birth by Mr. Snowden himself. The Labour Government was, therefore, reduced to a feeble Conservatism: it dithered, and the main reason why it dithered was that Mr. Snowden obstinately held to a Conservative philosophy even while he remained Chancellor of the Exchequer in a Labour Government. The real criticism of that Government was that it permitted itself to be dominated by Mr. Snowden. It gave a serious impression of weakness, not because it paid the dole, but because it retained an army of unemployed workers, without making a single workmanlike attempt to fulfil its promises of providing the unemployed with productive work. Such a comparison of aims and of policy was indeed exactly calculated to undermine the confidence of the investor as well as the loyalty of its supporters. As the results of this policy became increasingly apparent, Mr. Snowden continued to negative every proposal; he would listen neither to the Tory expedient of tariffs nor to the Liberal-Labour expedient of a loan. Finally, rather than admit the need for any positive policy he introduced a Budget which for sheer failure honestly to face the facts outdid the worst efforts of Mr. Churchill. As a result the Government, which he had misled and persistently kept in the dark—Mr. Snowden had access to the facts and figures denied to his colleagues—was confronted with a demand for economies which were opposed to their whole policy and philosophy. And this is the man who now turns and reviles them!

The most astonishing, and we must add the most shameful, part of Mr. Snowden's broadcast was his reference to the "grotesque" policy of the Labour Party and his statement that the proposal to control the banks and the channels of investment was "Bolshevism run mad." The public memory is, of course, short, but Mr. Snowden may have overestimated its brevity. His critics have been able to show with devastating effect that Mr. Snowden himself was only two years ago an ardent advocate of this revolutionary policy, that he was in fact a member of the Committee which drafted *Labour and the Nation*, which he declares that he never read through and now describes as "Bolshevism." In his speech he said that the Labour policy of control of national finance presumably meant control by a joint committee of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. Only three years ago he scotched that particular kind of objection by saying that he believed "in the suggestion that the Bank of England should be made the centre of what we might call a Public Corporation set up by Parliament, and, mind you, Parliament laying down the general principles on which this Corporation would work. . . . It is a reform

which has been advocated by many of the leading bankers. . . . I think it is one which would work admirably." Has there ever been so audacious an example of a change of political outlook—a change from sponsoring a policy as one which would "work admirably" in 1928 to describing the same policy as "Bolshevism run mad" in 1931?

It is curious that any man knowing so much of the City and of finance as Mr. Snowden should not have realised that the policy, of which he has been a lifelong advocate, must eventually alarm the investing class. It has for many years been a commonplace criticism of the Labour programme that those who tried to put it into operation would some day be faced with a flight from the pound, and no stronger criticism could be made of Mr. Snowden himself than that he has accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer in successive Labour Governments without apparently facing the prospect of that danger or preparing any plans to meet it. When eventually the threat was made it was Mr. Snowden who ran away; it was Mr. Snowden who was mean enough to desert his colleagues, and then to revile them for continuing to advocate the policy to which he and they were both pledged.

If Mr. Snowden believed in this policy which he now calls Bolshevism his attack upon his colleagues whom he had led into the bog and then deserted can only be described as contemptible; if he did not sincerely believe in it, and secretly always held that it was "Bolshevism run mad," what are we to say of his acceptance of high office in a Government pledged to carry it out?

If Mr. Snowden's character were all that was involved we could afford to pass over this unpleasant incident with a shrug of contempt. But far more is involved. When Mr. Snowden accuses Mr. Henderson, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Clynes of being Bolsheviks he is using words in a highly dangerous way. He knows, just as we all know, that these men are the most strict constitutionalists, only too anxious to adhere to the conventions of English politics and less likely to run any risks of dangerous inflation than Mr. Snowden has in practice shown himself to be. By describing their proposals for evolutionary Socialism as Bolshevism, Mr. Snowden at once classes himself with the ignorant and thoughtless clubmen who have always denounced him as a Bolshevik. It is a dangerous game. Do Mr. Snowden and his colleagues of the National Government think that Tory Governments are to be perpetual, that there is never again to be a Labour Government? If not, are they wise to treat the present sober leaders of Labour as something unclean, as outside the ordinary decencies of public life? If we are to be told that a flight from the pound is inevitable whenever there is a possibility of Labour gaining a majority, that it is the business of all patriotic people to sink their principles in order to keep Labour from a chance of power—then indeed there will very shortly appear a very different and really irresponsible party of the Left. It is a possibility which we do not ourselves contemplate with any pleasure, but it is one which the propaganda for the National Government and in particular the speeches of Mr. Snowden at this election seem designed to turn into a grim reality.

THE DANGER OF INFLATION

THE strongest card—almost the only card—now left in the National Government's propagandist hand is a vague fear in many people's minds of what would happen if Labour won. It is easy enough to expose the follies and futilities of the National Government's policy; but, at the end of it all, the electors are liable to be stampeded by that vague fear. What would happen? Would there not be a "flight from the pound?" Would the Budget be balanced? Should we be able to pay for the foodstuffs we must import if we are to live at all? Would not the business world, abroad as well as at home, lose all confidence in Great Britain?

It is of no use merely to brush these fears aside as idle imaginings; they lie deep down in many people's minds, and naturally the spokesmen of the Government are playing hard upon them. Mr. MacDonald himself, at Scaham and over the wireless, has conjured up horrid pictures of the consequences of inflation, which he holds out as the necessary sequel to the Government's defeat. What would happen to us, he asks, if our money became waste paper as the mark did in Germany after the war?

It would, indeed, be very dreadful. But would it happen? The Labour Party is as hostile to inflation as Mr. MacDonald, and as alive to the necessity of balancing the Budget. The difference on this point between the Government, so far as we know its policy at all, and the Opposition is one not of objective, but of method. Mr. Henderson wishes to balance the Budget in one way, Mr. MacDonald in another. There are two main points at issue. The Labour Party objects to cutting down unemployment benefit, and objects also to the inequalities of sacrifice which Mr. Snowden's new taxes involve. And it rejects the policy of drastically curtailing expenditure on towns, roads and other social services, on the ground that this is unnecessary, and bound to throw still more people out of work.

This means, of course, that the Labour Party has either to find more money, or to devise alternative economies. It proposes to do both. It holds that there is no sense in trying to pay off debt under present conditions, and it would therefore temporarily suspend the Sinking Fund. It would also, we hope and believe, make some further practical approach to disarmament, and so save money on the fighting services. Nor would it necessarily reject all the economies the National Government has made. It is reasonable to call for some sacrifices, provided that they are fairly spread.

There is no doubt that the Budget could be balanced in an alternative way, and none in our minds that it could be a much fairer way than that which the National Government has adopted. But would the balancing of the Budget stop a "flight from the pound," if Labour came back to office? That is what many people, and especially many Liberals, appear to doubt.

A "flight from the pound" may mean one or both of two things—a removal of foreign balances now lodged in London, or an attempt by British owners of capital to move their money abroad. Presumably, both are feared.

This country is not at present putting any obstacle in the way of a removal of foreign balances. It does, indeed, now stop foreigners from taking out their money in gold, so that they themselves have to bear the loss if, by a run on the pound, they depress its exchange value. But if they prefer to take their money away, even at a heavy loss, we are taking no steps to prevent them. On the other hand, as regards British citizens there is already an embargo on a flight from sterling which, whilst not perfectly watertight, is reasonably successful.

It has been suggested that a Labour victory might provoke a serious decline in the value of the pound. This risk has been much exaggerated, but it is, of course, possible that recent reckless propaganda might have that effect. We

must therefore consider how far the slump in the pound might go and what steps could be taken to check it.

In the first place it is only in the newspapers at home, not abroad nor in the City, that Mr. Henderson is regarded as an irresponsible or dangerous leader. He has proved himself a first-class Foreign Minister and on the Continent his reputation as a statesman stands to-day quite as high as that of Mr. MacDonald. Foreigners are, in fact, as our City editor urges to-day, more likely to lose confidence in British honesty if the Government were to attempt to stabilise sterling prematurely than if it permits it to find its own level. The foreigner is more frightened of a Government likely to embark on an early policy of stabilisation and resolved to introduce a tariff policy than a Labour Government intent on an international settlement. But even so we must face the possibility of a foreign run on the pound.

One alternative means of dealing with it would be to adopt rigid measures of control applicable to foreign, as well as to British, balances. That this can be done at least with a large measure of success Germany has shown; for she has done it, and is doing it now. It involves, of course, control of the banks, the Stock Exchanges, and the financial houses.

The other alternative would be to allow the underlying economic facts of the situation to operate by themselves. If sterling were to depreciate unreasonably, there would be many cool heads in the world who would begin to speculate in favour of sterling. For in the long run the value of sterling will not depend on post-election hysteria, but on the level of costs and incomes in terms of sterling maintained in the home market. If the exchange falls and prices rise, will the Labour Government be able to prevent a landslide? That is the only serious issue. For now that we are off gold, the external value of the pound depends essentially on its internal purchasing power. It may deviate from this temporarily, owing to loss of confidence or deliberate "bear" operations; but apart from these and in the long run the pound will be worth, roughly, almost what it will buy at home. If, then, we can prevent prices in this country from rising to an extent which would require a large increase of wages, there is no real risk of a serious fall in the pound's value.

The only danger, therefore, is that our domestic prices and wages might be allowed to rise in a vicious spiral. In that case nothing could stop the pound from collapse. But there is, in our view, no reason to fear that a Labour Government, returned in the present circumstances with its present leaders, would be tempted to embark on any such inflationary policy. Mr. Henderson and his colleagues are well aware that inflation of this kind would be ruinous to the standard of living of the working classes. They have explicitly and frequently repudiated the policy of inflation—is not the example of Germany before their eyes as it is before the Prime Minister's? We believe that they would consider it their first responsibility, as trustees for the future of democratic government in this country, to give the lie to the charges of cowardice and irresponsibility which have been freely levelled against them.

RUSSIAN NOTES

III. THE MAN WITH THE HOE

A SHREWD observer told me the other day that the most vital part of the Five Year Plan, and the most remarkable of the Communists' achievements, was the collectivisation of the farms. I daresay he is right. The feeding of Russia is obviously a problem of the first magnitude, and the peasantry—some 80 per cent. of the population—with their ignorance, their conservatism, and their powers of active or passive resistance, were from the outset the Achilles heel of the Revolution. But it looks now as if one stone has been found to kill several birds. The collective farm policy promises to settle the question of the food supply, to establish a Socialist system of agriculture, to turn the peasant from a menace into a pillar of the State, and to raise him from barbarism to civilisation. It has not been carried through without a struggle, and it has involved intense hardships for those who have kicked against the pricks. But if the end can ever be allowed to justify the means, Stalin and his friends have shown themselves something more than clever devils. They may claim to have taken a short cut to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and they have scored what seems, not merely to biased Bolsheviks, but to cool critics, an astonishing success.

Those who want the whole story will find no lack of books that tell it. Two in particular which can be recommended are *Red Bread*, by Maurice Hindus, and *Red Villages*, by Y. A. Yakovlev, the Commissar of Agriculture. The former is an extraordinarily able and sympathetic account of the peasants' mentality and trials and hopes by one who was himself born of a Russian peasant family. The latter deals with the problems as they present themselves to the Government. I must confine myself here to certain outstanding points and to comments in the light of what I saw and heard in Russia.

The big drive for collectivisation began in 1929, and was conducted so furiously that the figures laid down in the original plan were exceeded in the course of a few months. But the pace was too hot, and the methods employed not merely to extirpate the kulaks, but to force in the poor and "middle" peasants, provoked widespread resentment. The Government was alive to the danger, and in the spring of 1930 Stalin published his famous article, "Giddiness from Success," in which he rebuked the zealots who were going too fast and too far. The pressure was relaxed, and gentler measures introduced. The immediate result was a great exodus of the peasants from the new collectives. But in the autumn they came back again with little or no persuasion, and now 60 per cent. of all the peasant households of the country are collectivised—this time far more securely—and it will not need much effort to raise the percentage. Production has mounted rapidly with the change from the primitive culture of the smallholding to large scale co-operation; and it is supplemented by the output of the State farms, some of which run to a prodigious size. (It has just been decided that some of them are too big, and that they should be kept down to a maximum of 125,000 acres.) And the production will continue to mount as more land is taken into use, as the tractors and combines multiply, as the workers acquire skill and experience. There is no sign of slackening of effort on the part of the authorities in any of these directions, and there is the same awareness, in agriculture as in industry, that quality must not be subordinated to quantity.

Nor are the great grain farms and the squadrons of tractors the only concern of the apostles of this revolution. Their plans cover everything from tea and cotton and tobacco to tomatoes, water-melons and pigs—particularly pigs, for pigs, as Yakovlev has said, "produce meat faster than any other kind of livestock and they give more meat per unit of fodder than do cattle." I visited a State farm near Moscow which is nearing completion and which expects in a few months' time to house 1,500, and eventually 5,000, pigs. They should have no complaint to make of their styes, from which they will drive (if you need to drive a pig to its food) by asphalt paths to their mechanised communal kitchen and dining-room. Next year, it is prophesied there will be three million pigs, and in 1933 not less than seven million, making bacon in the U.S.S.R.

But what about the human side of all this, it will be asked. Does the man with the hoe like his metamorphosis into the man with the tractor? Do the Russian peasants really appreciate being brigaded and bossed and educated

and de-loused? Is the primitive passion for three acres and a cow—to be tilled in mediæval strips or milked dirtily—really being sublimated, or simply suppressed, only to break out presently and take its inevitable revenge? It is not possible to give a short and confident answer to those questions. There are, however, certain facts and probabilities on which a judgment can be based. It would be absurd to compare the Russian peasants to the happy harvesters in Morris's *News From Nowhere*. But it is equally absurd to depict them as a solid body of discontent, ground down by a remorseless tyranny and pining for what they have lost. Malcontents there no doubt are, on the farms as in the factories. The individualistic spirit still exists, and the Bolsheviks themselves do not make light of it. Years of determined struggle, it is said, will be needed to overcome the prejudices of the petty property owner, and to effect the final "liquidation" of the kulak class. But there is no evidence that the great mass of the peasants shares the feelings of the kulaks towards the regime, or is even deeply moved by their sufferings, shocking though these have been. The poor or the "middle" peasant may, in some cases, be actuated by fear of a like fate. On the other hand, he is offered better prospects and, indeed, already finds himself beginning to get a larger share of the produce of the land, improved housing and social amenities. Nor, on the collective farm, is he completely communised, the mere paid and propertyless servant of the State. He is a co-operator, who, though largely controlled by the State, still in part helps to make the orders that he obeys. In the *artel* form of organisation, which covers the majority of the collectivised peasant households, he still keeps his own home and garden and an animal or two, and in some co-operatives for common cultivation he is required only to pool his land and beasts for sowing and harvest.

Lastly, the Bolsheviks have an enormous asset in the youth. The influence of the young is apparent everywhere, in the countryside no less than in the town—from the school children who laugh their parents out of church-going, to the Young Communists who, singly or in groups, devote themselves to the task of inspiring, leading, pushing, organising and, if need be, intimidating, the sluggards or doubters. These young men and women have had their education (about which I shall say more in a later article) in the Communist schools and universities or in the Red Army. They have energy, enthusiasm and faith, and they have careers open to their talents, in agriculture as well as in industry. (At one collective farm I went to, a small dairy, fruit and vegetable farm with a total personnel of a hundred, a dozen of the younger "labourers" were away doing university courses.) Every year will increase their numbers and decrease the numbers of the elders who may hanker after ancient ways. In these circumstances, unless some economic or political catastrophe upsets all calculations, the odds are against a peasant revolt.

On the significance of the Plan as a whole it is not my business to speculate here. But there is one point of some practical importance on which I shall say a word. The Communists boast that, bar accidents (and the chief accident they fear is a capitalist war on the Soviets), they will in the course of ten or twelve years surpass the production of the United States. And American and other business men with whom I have spoken, if they do not quite believe that, believe at least that Russia is in the way to becoming a dangerous competitor in the markets of the world. But surely that depends, first, on what is the object of the markets of the world. If it is to supply the needs of the world to the fullest possible extent and with the least possible restriction, then the output of Soviet oil and timber, corn, butter and eggs—and manufactured articles, if and when their quality is assured—should be a blessing and not a curse. If it is a curse it will be political perversity that makes it so. Secondly, apart altogether from political considerations, Russia's own internal market is almost limitless. At present the Soviet Government is driven, in order to pay for the imports necessary for reconstruction and development, to export goods that are clamoured for at home. It cannot, nor will it desire, to pursue such a policy indefinitely. The people of Russia are kept going by the hope not merely of spiting the capitalist world, but of getting more food and clothes and comforts for themselves. When they have got more they will want more still. And long before they are satisfied, the danger of the competition of communist Russia with capitalist America and Europe will have disappeared. For who can suppose that either the one or the other will be a generation hence what it is to-day?

C. M. LLOYD.

A LONDON DIARY

THE bitterness and vindictiveness in Mr. MacDonald's and Mr. Snowden's attitude towards their old colleagues and party will not surprise anyone who has studied the working of the mind and heart in that strange and savage political animal called man. No one hates sin more vigorously than the converted sinner, and naturally, therefore, no one hates a Socialist more than a Socialist who has become a Nationalist. In England we have hitherto not known this kind of conversion, but on the Continent, and particularly in France, it is a commonplace of politics. Monsieur Briand is, of course, the best-known example, the politician who began as the Socialist who at the Nantes Congress of 1894 got the French Trade Unions to adopt the general strike as their official policy, and who fifteen years later as Prime Minister of a bourgeois Government broke the general strike of railway men by clapping the Labour leaders into jail. Millerand and Viviani are examples of the same political life history, and last, but not in the least least is—Mussolini. Is the appearance of Mr. MacDonald as leader of a Conservative Government perhaps one more proof that we are passing from the British two-party system to the Continental group system? In such a system, as the history of French politics shows, the parties of the Right find considerable advantage in getting their leaders occasionally, and particularly in crises, from converted Socialists.

* * *

I have heard no little dissatisfaction and disgust expressed at the Archbishop of Canterbury's adulation of Mr. MacDonald. One churchman I met said to me: "I do not in the least mind parsons in politics—they have votes and should have opinions; but a diocesan conference is the wrong place for an archbishop, while professing to be free from any party allegiance, to praise MacDonald for 'conspicuous courage,' refusal 'to be deceived,' and a readiness 'to face facts.'" I am sure many clergy and many laymen will resent this archiepiscopal insinuation that MacDonald, Snowden, and Thomas are more courageous and more clear-sighted than are the men who refused to go with them. It is a scandal that Dr. Lang should give any support to the insolent assumption that Mr. MacDonald and his Conservative allies have any monopoly of patriotism or statesmanship.

* * *

Mr. Ernest Bevin's decision to stand as Labour candidate for Gateshead is an important matter. For Mr. Bevin, who has hitherto steadfastly refused to enter Parliament, is the outstanding personality of the Trade Union movement. He has in the past been tempted often enough with the offer of safe seats. But his answer has always been that his job as secretary of the Transport Workers takes him all his time, and that his heart is too much in it for him to bear giving it up. It would indeed be strange to see Mr. Bevin no longer the leader of the Transport Workers and the dominant personality of the Trades Union Congress; and

one wonders if his return to Parliament will mean his giving these things up. If it will, his decision is a measure of the critical importance of the election to the Trade Union movement; for nothing less than a sense of the gravest urgency would cause him to leave Trade Union activity for politics. In Parliament his coming is likely to make a big difference; for he has not only a quick wit and a mastery of facts, but also a keen sense of strategy. It would not surprise us at all to see Mr. Bevin leader of the Labour Party, and Prime Minister, before he has done.

* * *

Such strange things happen in London streets that the Londoner is hardly ever surprised at what befalls him, but I must say that I was a little bit astonished the other evening when two people asked me to help them steal my own dog. I had gone out for a stroll without a hat after dark and the dog, as London dogs will, was strolling even more slowly than I. She was a long way behind me, and as I turned a corner I noticed a smart car with two persons, a man and a woman, standing talking by it with the door open. I had got some way past the corner, and as the dog did not appear I turned back to get her to come on. Almost immediately she appeared round the corner running hard and pursued by the two people whom I had noticed by the car. The man was in front with hand outstretched and calling to the dog. The dog ran past me into the road and the man followed her. I asked him what he wanted with my dog. He looked extremely uncomfortable and surprised and made off without a word. I moved away in the other direction, the dog trotting in front of me. The woman had apparently not seen what was happening, for she ran after us calling to the dog and trying to catch it. I stopped and the dog drew away from her at my feet. The woman again tried to catch her and, when she failed, said to me: "Do you mind catching my dog for me?" I stood silent with my hands in my pockets and the woman looked up and saw me smiling. I have never seen anyone more astonished. "Is that your dog?" she stammered. "Yes, it is," I said. She bolted at once.

* * *

The Great National Cause:

> In spite of the somewhat gloomy outlook at the present time, the prospects of the coming hunting season are generally satisfactory as regards the evidence of good feeling towards the sport by the farmers, the excellent supply of foxes everywhere, and the interest taken in the sport. Still, it is clear that in the present emergency, with high taxation, falling as it does heavily on hunting people, the dominant note will have to be one of economy.

—The *Times* Hunting Correspondent.

* * *

Overheard in Stepney: "I don't know what the country's coming to, but I don't like the look of things. What's that nigger doing sitting up on that roof in the Bow Road? He's not up to any good, I'll be bound." CRITIC.

THE WORD "NATIONAL"

CHILD. Pray, Mamma, what is the meaning of the word National?

PARENT. That depends, my dear, on the noun or substantive to which it is applied. If you are talking of a National Party it means the Conservative Party, plus the National Labour Party, plus the National Liberal Party, plus the Liberal National Party.

CHILD. Why, Mamma, in the list you have so kindly given me, do all the parties except the Conservative Party have to have the word National put in front of them?

PARENT. Because, my dear, the Conservatives are National in all elections. The other parties have only become National owing to the patriotic conduct of Mr. MacDonald, Sir John Simon, and Sir Herbert Samuel.

CHILD. Oh, thank you, Mamma, now I understand. I presume, then, that the word National has the same meaning when applied to the National Liberal, Liberal National, and National Labour Parties?

PARENT. Not entirely so, my child. In the case of the Liberal Nationals it means that Sir John Simon and his colleagues have adopted a Conservative policy, but from motives of patriotism wish to retain the name Liberal during the Election. In the case of the National Liberals it means that Sir Herbert Samuel is less patriotic than Sir John Simon and wishes to remain a Liberal even after the Election. In the case of the National Labour Party it means a confusion of mind which is also due to patriotic motives and which is highly commendable in the present national emergency.

CHILD. But is it not unfortunate, Mamma, that these gentlemen do not entirely agree?

PARENT. Well, my dear, perhaps it appears more unfortunate than it actually is, because, when the National Government is returned to power, its policy will in any case be Conservative, while the word National will have served a patriotic purpose during the Election in keeping Labour out.

THE HOST

IT is expected that many English men and women who in ordinary circumstances go abroad for a winter holiday will this year remain at home and crowd the hotels of the South Coast. Foreseeing this, a correspondent has addressed a letter to the Editor of the *Times*, appealing to the proprietors or managers of English hotels to adapt themselves to the situation and to make themselves as like foreign hotel-keepers as possible, welcoming the guest with open arms on his arrival and speeding the parting guest with pleasant words. "These acts of courtesy," he writes, "leave the visitor with the feeling that he is wanted, instead of what he constantly feels here—that he has been trespassing." I have nothing to say against foreign methods in this matter. It is delightful to stay in a French hotel in which the manageress, every time she meets you, gives you the impression that of all the guests she has had for some time, you are her special favourite. When she says good morning she makes it sound like a compliment. The French are said to be a suspicious race, but, in their hotels, they give you the impression that they are the sort of people who would cash post-dated cheques for strangers—at least for one stranger. The English hotel, on the other hand, encourages no such pleasant illusions. When you enter its hall, no human beings are to be seen anywhere. A mechanical lady sits at a desk, invites you to write your name in a book, and gives you a number. A mechanical lift-boy shows you to your room, where a mechanical boots is depositing your luggage. A mechanical chambermaid brings you hot water and, when you go downstairs to the lounge, a mechanical waiter brings you a drink. All round you sit mechanical fellow-guests, and you feel that you yourself will soon become one of them unless you escape into the open air. Who is the presiding spirit of the place you do not know. It is something unseen, sinister, chilling the imagination. If only the manager would appear and show a little enthusiasm on catching sight of you, what a difference it would make! But, even if he did, enthusiasm somehow does not sound the same in English as in French.

Apart from this, the English hotel-keeper may have excellent reasons for keeping out of the way of his guests. He may be thinking of his wine-list and remembering that he is about to charge you six shillings for a bottle of claret which you can see priced two and threepence in the window of a wineshop. He may be thinking of the dinner with which he is about to serve you. He may be chuckling

secretly in his room at the thought of your bill. I do not wish to frame a general indictment of English hotels, for a good English hotel is as good as a good hotel anywhere. But there are a number of hotels with so few virtues that one wonders how they ever obtained permission to hang out the signs of the motoring associations. I lunched this summer in an A.A. hotel in which the meal went from bad to worse down to the execrable coffee served with skin-infested milk. Would everybody's spirits have risen if the manager had entered the dining-room with beaming face? Or, if he had done so, would he have escaped alive? One never can tell. The English are a patient people. If they were not they would not have so many bad hotels.

I hope, then, that during the coming winter the hotel-keepers will begin with some more important reform than standing at the door to receive and say farewell to their guests. I would rather have a good meal than a hand-shake any day. Or, rather, I do not ask for good food; I ask only that the food shall be almost eatable. I am not a connoisseur of coffee, but I like coffee to taste not too like the water in which coffee cups have been washed. I am no vegetarian, but I hold that a vegetable that is worth cooking is worth cooking well. Would mankind have ever cultivated the cauliflower if they had foreseen what a really bad hotel-cook could make of it? Is the hotel cabbage the result of laziness, or is it a subtle device for spoiling the diner's appetite and so economising on the food bill? I do not know, I am inclined to think that there is no deliberate malice in it, but that the English are lazier than most nations and that they grudge every minute spent on the preparation of such superfluous things as vegetables. They take the view that if you are hungry you will eat anything, and that if you are not hungry it would be a sin to tempt you.

And the laziness begins, I believe, not in the kitchen, but with the hotel-keeper himself. Most of the small hotels probably began as public-houses, and the publican is a man who is accustomed to make money without much effort. If he keeps his bar clean and neat, and is ordinarily good natured, his drink all but sells itself. Hence he comes to the conclusion that a day's works consists in sitting in a chair doing nothing, with intervals of walking up and down and giving an occasional order. No doubt, there is a certain amount of work to be done in providing supplies and in balancing accounts, but he has no feeling that every hour of the working day must be occupied, and I doubt whether he expends more than an hour's energy in the whole course of the day. Hence, when he comes to sell food, he wishes to do so as easily as he sells drink. Unfortunately, no hotel can be run on these principles. The good hotel-keeper must be as active as an insect. He must be up with the lark, determined that every guest shall have a perfect breakfast. Before his own breakfast is over he will be thinking of lunch, his mind filled with the vision of a perfectly laid table, of meat exquisitely cooked, of potatoes so delicious in flavour that they alone would justify the discovery of America, of sweet dishes that would transform an old man into a greedy child, of cheeses varied, comely, and of exactly the right age, and of coffee concerning which the guests would have only one doubt—whether its fragrance or its flavour was the more beautiful. And so on through the whole day, planning, creating—an artist with an artist's joy. Nor would this liveliness be confined to the dining-room. Every room in the hotel would shine with the radiance of the hotel-keeper's genius. He would notice that a guest who read in bed would have to get out of bed after reading and tramp across the cold floor to switch off the light. Immediately, he would have a new switch fixed at the head of the bed. He would notice that there was no writing paper in some of the desks in the lounge, and no ink in others; and he would remedy these things. No flaw would be too small to escape his eye; and before long there would be no flaws.

This may seem an alarming prospect to the ordinary hotel-keeper. But let him have courage: he need do all this only for a month or so. By the end of a month he will have infused such a spirit of artistry into his staff that he will safely be able to delegate nine-tenths of his work to others. By this time the kitchen will be singing with creative energy. It will feel as much ashamed of boiling a potato badly as Washington felt of telling a lie. The prune will be stewed with a sense of the holiness of the task. Meat dishes and sweet dishes alike will be prepared as if by priests and priestesses. Cooks will discover that there is as much joy to be had in the preparation of French beans as in writing a lyric. And as for coffee, it will be recognised that here is an opportunity for a new art, delighting two senses that neither literature nor music can stir. If only the ordinary hotel-keeper realised how much happiness he could create, not only for himself, but for his guest and his staff, by a little hard work, I am sure he would not grudge the effort.

Meanwhile, until he has done these things, let the bad hotel-keeper remain out of our sight. We want no treacherous greeting from him at the door if he is about to poison us with his coffee. We want no parting sneer, disguised as a smile, from him if he has made every meal an exasperation and soured our tempers with his wines. We prefer to believe that these things were done by some cold, inhuman machine, not by a monster of our own species; and if he keeps out of sight we can pretend this to ourselves. There is one restaurant in London—a very bad one—in which the manager comes up to one in the middle of a vile meal and smilingly asks one: "Everything all right, sir?" He never asks this question without making the meal seem doubly vile. I often feel that, if I had even the normal amount of courage, I would leap up and tell him: "No, everything is not all right. Everything is all wrong. The chicken is tough and lukewarm. The potatoes are soap. The sprouts are an insipid mush." But I never tell him, I nod and say, "Yes, thank you," with hatred in my heart, or, when I have not even been able to eat the dish, I simply nod. I do not wish to have to tell lies of this kind in hotels as well. The parting guest who has not been fed has no desire to be sped. Let the hotel-keepers look to this.

Y. Y.

A VOTER'S VISION

I DREAMED last night of a candidate
Who started his address
With a clear account of our national state
And the international mess;
He hadn't a slogan to aid his cause
Or a scapegoat to upbraid,
But he showed that he understood the laws
Of currency and trade.

He talked of bank-rates, and loans, and gold,
And he made the matter plain;
He held us spell-bound the while he told
Why the war-debts proved our bane;
He'd studied the problems of tax and rent
And the "economic man";
He knew what "invisible exports" meant
And he'd heard of the "Hoover Plan."

He never hedged and he never lied,
Though we heckled him good and hard,
As he showed how the pound might stand or slide
As the League was made or marred. . . .
And a silly nightmare it seems, because
When I glanced through my shorthand note,
I forgot to ask what his Party was
Ere giving the man my vote.

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

THE ELECTION AND THE LIBERAL POSITION

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—We who are Liberal workers, speakers and candidates place on record our resentment at the way in which Liberalism is being swamped from the public gaze at this election. The mongering and bargaining for seats which is being passed off as a patriotic gesture we deplore as nothing more than a party ruse, which has enmeshed so many erstwhile—and, unfortunately, still so-called—Liberals.

We would support a truly National Government, but this administration, which has deserted its task in the hour of crisis, which failed to save the pound despite its mistaken policy of reducing purchasing power, and which prefers tariff twaddle to the urgent necessity for international co-operation, has no right to its self-assumed title.

We refuse to be associated with such underhand tactics and will not help any Liberal candidate who has taken part in them.

More than ever we feel the importance of resisting all attacks on the standard of life of the people, and are disgusted with the Tory attempt to create a national panic out of the international crisis.

We have, therefore, decided to assist only those Liberals who declare their opposition to all tariffs and Tory reaction, and boldly proclaim a Radical programme, which we interpret as sane progress and reconstruction, the economic emancipation of the people, and equality of opportunity for all.

If those who are betraying these beliefs persist in their claim to be Liberals, we would rather renounce the name, which we cannot share with them, than our political faith.

It now lies with those of us who remain loyal to the ever progressive ideals of true Liberalism to come together.—Yours, etc.,

HAYDN DAVIES (Liberal Candidate, S.W. St. Pancras, 1929).
B. A. WELLER (London and Young Liberal Executive).
EDWARD G. BACH (Liberal Candidate, Chelsea L.C.C., 1931).
RUTH LANDA (City of London Young Liberals).
RUSSELL TILLETT (Vice-Chairman Liberal Speakers' Association).
GEO. H. GLADMAN (Sec. N. Battersea Liberal Assoc.).

20 Gordon Street, W.C.1.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—May I say, quite briefly, that while I agree with much in Mr. Harold Wright's admirable article, I do not agree with his conclusions? "Protection," he says, "is the lesser of the dangers with which the country is faced." I do not think so. There is no danger at the moment of a recurrence of the "sloppy and inefficient Socialism" to which Mr. Wright objects; our choice lies between a comparatively balanced Government and an extreme and reactionary one.

Behind a recrudescence of the flag-wagging and misplaced emotionalism which characterised the 1924 election the Die-hards of the Tory Party, as your leading articles have pointed out, have once again "got away with it." But this time no pledges, such as Mr. Baldwin gave in 1924, stand in their way; the "free hand" is a synonym for the mailed fist.

To my mind, therefore, the duty of Liberals who have no Liberal candidate to vote for is to resist with all the strength they can command this outrageous political ramp. In this connection Mr. Lloyd George has shown a perspicacity to which—too late—his colleagues will presently pay tribute.

And why, I wonder, does Mr. Wright call our prospective Government a "strong" Government? Bluster and prejudice do not constitute strength; but these elements, I fear, will bulk very largely in its make-up.—Yours, etc.,

Shenington, Banbury. HUBERT PHILLIPS.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In Mr. Harold Wright's article in your issue of last week, the following sentence occurs:

"Fortunately, however, drastic measures had been taken to balance the budget before the pound fell, with the result that it drifted gently down, instead of falling, like Humpty Dumpty, with a resounding crash."

The Humpty-Dumpty theory has been an inestimable boon to the National Government. Having set themselves up to keep Humpty Dumpty on his wall, they first terrified us with lurid prophecies of how far he would fall if they let him go, and then, when despite their best endeavours he fell, but only a little way, they announce that they have saved the poor fellow by catching him on the balanced budget. Mr. Wright apparently believes in this feat of derring-do. Would he be good enough to tell us where we are wrong in thinking that Humpty Dumpty had in any case only a little way to fall?

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is an oasis of clear thinking in the whirling sands of clap-trap, good intentions and pontifical exhortations through which we stagger towards this momentous General Election. There should be no place in its pages for an election cry unsupported by rational argument. Humpty Dumpty is being used for all he is worth on "pull-together" platforms. Is he (*a*) in your opinion, and (*b*) in Mr. Wright's, really Humpty Dumpty, or only Bogy-Bogy?—Yours, etc.,

BARRINGTON GATES.
Farnborough, Hants. F. W. MEREDITH.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—You courteously invite internationally minded Liberals like myself to consider that "only an international settlement can save us all from something like ruin." I cordially agree with that statement, and also with your admirable leader under the above title. It appears to me, however, that we cannot hope for much progress in international conference until we have shown some capacity for putting our own house in order; and the Labour Party's programme would complete the destruction of the pound before a conference could even be called.

Mr. Henderson is not a "wild man," certainly, but what "resolute measures" could he take to avert a further flight from the pound, when he is pledged to restore the "dole" and the "cuts," not to mention the nationalisation of banking and credit?—Yours, etc., HAROLD WRIGHT.

Court Haw, Woodmansterne,
Banstead, Surrey.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—It may be that I was born with a prejudice against all National Governments, but I must confess that the more I hear and read of the one to be elected next week the less I like it. I suppose one ought to feel grateful that all the elder statesmen should be willing to pool their wisdom and experience for the sake of saving their country (and their pounds). And all those terribly sound and sensible letters in the *Times* every day—how completely they should convince one that progress is an idle dream, and that only by a return to "sound finance" can the nation be saved from bankruptcy.

Yet, as a Liberal, I don't feel like that at all. The more I am told to be patriotic, the more I feel like a Bolshevik. And I do not think this is entirely due to my innate prejudice against National Governments, because whatever Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Rothermere, Lord Brentford, and soon-to-be Lord Snowden may say, I do not believe this will be a National Government at all. It will be a Conservative Government. A Government whose candidates consist of 24 Labour, 120 Liberal and 520 Conservatives must in effect be a Conservative Government, because it will depend upon a Conservative majority in the House of Commons, and will in addition have a ready-made Conservative majority in the House of Lords.

Quite apart from its decided Protectionist bias, which to my old-fashioned and Cobdenite mind is sufficient reason for opposing it tooth and nail, the National Government is pledged to a policy completely contrary to everything Liberalism has fought for during the last three hundred years—particularly that vital, modern Liberalism which found its fullest expression in the Yellow Book. Its policy is contractionist, stilted and unimaginative—the very opposite of the policy Liberals have been urging during the last two years. How constant and how just were Liberal complaints that the Labour Government would not get on with the job of national development. Are the Yellow Book, *How to Conquer Unemployment*, and its recent discreetly modified *How to Tackle Unemployment*, together with the general expansionist policy they represented, to be discarded, and Liberalism to be sacrificed on the altar of the god of deflation? Is this the way to soothe the ills of a world writhing in the agony of under-consumption?

Internationally the prospect is even more gloomy. In a

crisis which has been misnamed national, but which is in essence international, what kind of attitude can Liberals expect in world affairs from a Government whose majority is composed of those who refused to sign the optional clause, who drove Lord Cecil in despair from Geneva, and who violently opposed the London Naval Agreement—not to mention their fanatical determination to put up tariffs at all cost?

The leaders of the Liberal Party have again missed a great opportunity. Since the idea of maintaining an independent Liberal Party did not seem to occur to them, would it not have been better, and more in accordance with Liberal policy, to have united with the left instead of with the right? The formation of a solid, radical left wing of politics was much more important for the future than the formation of a jagged, indeterminate right block with no distinct objective other than the destruction of the Labour Party. There will always be a right and a left wing in politics, and if—as it appears—there can no longer be a middle wing—isn't the place of Liberals with the left rather than with the right? Then on either side of politics there would have been a party to please the exacting demands of the foreign investor for confidence and security, whereas now there is only one, so that when a few years later the left party returns to power I suppose we shall have the crisis all over again.—Yours, etc.,

11 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, W.C.2. GUY DIXON.
Liberal Candidate, Melton Division of Leicestershire, 1929.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I have studied the Labour Party's Manifesto for the coming General Election with considerable interest and a large measure of agreement. Two important points, however, seem to have been almost ignored.

(*a*) While agreeing that a balanced Budget is a first condition of sound national finance, it says very little as to how the end is to be accomplished. Seeing that the Labour Party has pledged itself to repeal the Economy Act, it is obvious that a large amount of additional money will have to be raised by further taxation or other means. I am aware that several remedies have already been proposed in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, e.g., temporarily suspending the Sinking Fund, but I am sure that many of your readers would feel happier in voting Labour if they knew more precisely its proposals for dealing with the next Budget.

(*b*) The Manifesto makes no mention of any immediate steps to be taken for restoring our trade balance. Does the Labour Party consider this essential? If so, what means does it propose to employ to restore it? Of course, one must agree that the depreciation of the pound may be sufficient to obviate any further action, but I think the electors are entitled to know whether the Labour Party has any proposals for dealing with an emergency of this nature should it arise.—Yours, etc., W. K. WELTON.

80 Coombe Road, Preston,
Paignton, Devon.
October 18th.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—When Mr. MacDonald agreed (at the express wish of the King) to form a National Government, he little thought that so patriotic a purpose would be exploited for purely party ends.

Yet such is the case. The Conservative Press says openly that the "National" objective is to smash Socialism, i.e., the Labour Party, in spite of the fact that the Prime Minister denies this and affirms that he is still as much a Socialist as ever!

In the circumstances it would appear that the best thing that can happen as the outcome of this forced election is for the above sinister aim to fail ignominiously. Protection may well be a greater peril than Socialism. Socialism and Bolshevism are not synonymous.—Yours, etc.,

"Lyndhurst," North Harrow, Middlesex. FRANCIS J. WHITE.
October 19th.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I wish to send you a word of encouragement and say how much I appreciate your attitude in this crisis. Believe me, there are hundreds of Radicals like myself who feel that to support this National Government would be to turn our coats. It is easy, apparently, for politicians to sell their heritage and for newspapers to screech their self-righteous bunkum, but thank God there are still some men who can cry truth even though it be in the wilderness. A toast to your scorching rays!—Yours, etc.,

4 High Bogton, Muirend, Glasgow. J. BRUNTON MCLENNON.
October 11th.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I have always taken an interest in the politics of your country and never more so than now, for the situation strikes me as being very comic.

On the one side you have what some people are pleased to call a "National" Government, but what is really only a Conservative Government taking advantage of Mr. MacDonald's national prestige. They think to cure the crisis which originated in over-production by cutting down consumption.

On the other side you have the Socialists, trying to hide the fact that they connived with Mr. MacDonald in his economy scheme, and for this purpose they shout: "A bankers' ramp." Their policy appears to be the nationalisation of almost everything, even of banking, about which they must know little or nothing, for banking is an expert's job.

It seems to me a pity that the Socialists have dropped their policy of gradualness and have decided to go the whole hog, for in so doing they minimise their chances of winning the election and Socialism will suffer a severe set-back in England.—Yours, etc.,

1 Rue des Beaux Arts, Neuchâtel, Switzerland. H. I. MATTHEY.
October 14th.

LABOUR RESPONSIBILITY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In recent articles you have rightly stressed the danger of accentuating the division of England into two nations—a division embodying the fears of Disraeli and the hopes of Karl Marx. You have put the main responsibility for the crisis and for this dangerous division on creditors, national and individual, who are unwilling to forgo or abate any of the money claims arising out of the war, and there is little doubt that unless those claims are relinquished, or at least severely scaled down, the world cannot bear the burden, and our social and industrial order will break down. You protest, rightly, I think, against unfair exaggerated criticism of the Labour Party, which is now the Opposition and may some day be in office again, and perhaps in power.

But I do not see how to acquit Labour of all responsibility for our present difficulties, and there is no advantage in trying to cloak its real failings.

I must concentrate on one characteristic only of the Labour movement which is, I believe, the true underlying cause of its present frustration and incidentally of the deplorable position in which the British electorate is now placed. Perhaps the greatest hindrance to the policy of social reconstruction for which Labour stands is the Labour "platform attitude." The Labour Party has repudiated the Communists, but for all that its popular propaganda is mainly Marxism diluted with much admirable humanitarian sentiment. Now Marxism is not merely antiquated as a system of economics, but both in psychology and morals it is a definitely reactionary influence. In Russia it can make a contribution to progress because it replaces a still more reactionary and still more antiquated system. In England, when it is not simply a nuisance it becomes a positive menace to progress. Yet the Marxist mentality still unduly pervades the Labour movement. Picturesque phrases like "Capitalism in dissolution," "The breakdown of the capitalist system," no doubt serve to hearten Labour. But they only darken counsel, and are a disservice to the national life. They drive thousands of voters into the booby-trap. It is not Conservative slanders and misrepresentations which defeat Labour. Labour is defeated by what, one hopes, is misrepresentation of itself.

Furthermore, such intoxicating rhetoric incapacitates Labour for initiating social reconstruction. It means that Labour is not seriously facing real issues. Sir Norman Angell thus describes the effect of the Labour "platform attitude": "Put it to a Labour adherent so indoctrinated that a given proposal may

bring the present system to deadlock, and he will be apt to retort as a good Socialist, 'So much the better.' *Too often he has not really made up his mind whether he wants to prevent sudden breakdown or promote it.*" That, in my judgment, is the essential weakness, the essential moral and intellectual failure, of the Labour movement, and particularly of the Socialist element in it. A party which has not made up its mind on that issue will never gain, and will certainly never deserve, the national confidence.

It will be said that the Labour Party is strictly constitutional, and fully intends to prevent sudden breakdown. But how is the public to know this, if its responsible leaders constantly use language anticipating with satisfaction the breakdown of the present order? Moreover, while those who are in any sort of sympathetic touch with Labour can discount the folly of its propaganda, and know that the wiser elements in the movement do want to prevent a sudden breakdown, yet those wiser elements do not see what is involved in their intention if it is to succeed. The only way to secure a peaceful transformation of the present order is to be willing to co-operate with those at present responsible for industry and finance. To vilify bankers and the banking system as Labour is now doing is no possible basis for honourable co-operation. But neither economically nor politically is Labour willing to co-operate with men and women of good will who cannot repeat Socialist shibboleths or accept the Labour Party discipline. Economically the conservatism and lack of constructive power in the T.U. movement have seriously hindered economic recovery and industrial reorganisation.

Politically, class-conscious sentiment which is only justified on the Marxist basis prevents Labour from co-operating with Liberals or Tory Democrats or non-party social reformers. If at the last election Labour had been willing to be the predominant partner in an open working alliance with the Liberals we should have had a strong progressive Government with a majority of from 80 to 100 in the House. The present crisis might never have arisen, and we should certainly have been in a better position to meet it.

Sympathisers with Labour and many active supporters of the movement have long known of this serious weakness. Little has been said about it, because Labour opinion is very sensitive. With all its weakness, as I see it, Labour is still preferable to Conservative Protectionism, and in a straight fight between the two I should normally vote Labour. But if we are saddled with a Protectionist Government, I cannot help thinking that we shall owe the misfortune, in part at least, to the fact that Labour was neither humble enough to admit its mistakes, nor magnanimous enough to co-operate with others in saving England.—Yours, etc.,

Woodbrooke, Birmingham. H. G. WOOD.

THE LONDON GROUP

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I always read Mr. Earp's criticisms with great interest and profound respect for his independence of judgment and vigorous exposition, but I should like to take up with him one or two questions raised by his remarks on the London Group in your last issue. As a member of that body I know that I am probably biased, and certainly it would ill become me to challenge what he says about the older and more established reputations in the group. In fact I agree with him that most of their exhibits are disappointing and that, as far as they are concerned, it is a year of mediocrity, though I should like to put in a plea for Mrs. Vanessa Bell's *Forum*, which seemed to me almost the best thing she has ever done in landscape and as radiantly luminous and exhilarating in colour as anything I have seen this year.

But I should like to persuade Mr. Earp that in another respect this exhibition has considerable interest; I refer to the work of the younger exhibitors, many of them non-members and as yet but little known. My impression of this show led me to feel optimistic about the future of art in England. I was delighted to think that so many young painters are coming along who have the courage to eschew all the fashionable mannerisms and to trust to their own visual experiences. The other day in Paris I asked a dealer who devotes himself to the rising generation whether he could show me the work of any man under thirty who was not a mannerist. "Ah! no," he said, "that would be asking too much." Well, here in the London Group, together with a good many rather tasteful essays in various, mostly French, mannerisms, there is a good sprinkling of courageously independent effort.

The Gazebo, by Robin Darwin, is a good example of this attitude. The design is no doubt rather casual, but it just supports a very fresh and unexpected colour harmony which is stated with delightful freshness and care. It has the uniqueness and coherence of a moment of genuine vision. A portrait by the same artist shows great power of concentration, but naturally enough he has not yet learnt to hold throughout so long a gestation the freshness of the original moment of vision. *Gravesend*, by Claude Rogers, is another clearly felt and simply stated vision with a delightful cool grey and grey-blue harmony. The artist has found the exact value of the grey light on the dirty London tiles which his idea demanded. Once more, in Miss Hepworth's *Ampthill Square*, we get an unfamiliar interpretation of London atmosphere. One recognises at once the essential truth of this statement of the rather dirty yellow-green given by pallid sunlight shining through grass blades, of the foxy brown of the houses and the brilliant blackness of the tree trunks. There are a number of what one may call accepted interpretations of London atmosphere—one in dull purples and acid greens, which the Camden Town group exploited too monotonously—but no one, I think, has ever happened to see creatively just this interpretation, though, the moment someone does, it stirs innumerable latent memories in any observant Londoner. What is so encouraging is to find how many of these younger artists are alert enough to explore their own sensations. There is such a temptation to pass them by as insignificant until one comes upon some aspect of nature that has been already explored and consecrated by an accredited seer.

William Hampton again treats London beautifully in the *Back Garden*. Though this is not quite so fresh and spontaneous as the last-named works it is beautifully designed, and though the mood seems to have been more consciously envisaged there is no undue emphasis—it transpires quite naturally and inevitably from the plastic treatment. In Mr. William Townsend's *Mill House* the oddity and unexpectedness of the composition gets its full significance from the luminosity and simplicity of the colour scheme. It is a delightfully clear and untroubled vision.

More accomplished and more pictorially cunning is Miss Maria Samora's *Le Chat Noir*, a street in a French village with a brilliant scarlet house front. This has its full intensity, its full decorative effect, without interfering with the delicacy and elusiveness of the pervading atmosphere—no easy feat to accomplish—though there is nothing of the *tour de force* about it, no sacrifice, no distortion of the vision. Another delicately felt and simply stated impression is Miss Elizabeth Watson's *Still Life With Fish*, though it has not become quite sufficiently clear in the design.

These examples do not exhaust the list of works which struck me as having possibilities of future development, but they are enough to make me feel less depressed by the show as a whole than your critic seems to have been.—Yours, etc.

48 Bernard Street, W.C.1. ROGER FRY.

THE SOCIALISATION OF THE BANKS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I was delighted to see Mr. Alexander's letter in the columns of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, with Mr. Cole's endorsement of his views. Some form of consumer credit must obviously be issued if consumption is to be equated to production and prosperity restored. I would suggest that this could most easily be done by averting the threatened rise in retail prices. Coercive measures are bound to prove useless in the long run, since the cause of the rise is financial, and we cannot expect dealers to bankrupt themselves in the public interest. But as Major Douglas long ago pointed out, the Government could easily issue new money to retailers on condition that they reduced prices to the consumer. The new money so issued would in effect be a consumer credit unaccompanied by inflation.—Yours, etc.,

37 Morland Avenue, C. L. HUNT.
Croydon, Surrey.
October 15th.

THE NORDICS FACE CRISIS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Strong's review of *Human Heredity* by Baur, Fisch and Lenz was timely. Your paper has not minimised the crisis with which our people are faced—a crisis which may well involve the entire Nordic stock. So that I gladly followed the example of your reviewer and read deeply of *Human Heredity*, that "masterpiece of objective research and careful hypothesis."

Our race of fearless Empire builders need have no fear for the future, for Dr. Lenz in his sections of the book shows clearly that the Nordic stock (of which we have the honour to be members) is endowed with "vigorous imagination and high intelligence," with "foresight," "organising ability," "artistic capacity" (not strongly marked in music, I regret to state) "courage," "restraint," and "self-control." The Nordic is "dissatisfied with the obvious" and "longs to get to the bottom of everything"; "he subordinates his sensual impulses to a remote aim." It is true he is "pugnacious," but "happily we need not suppose that this is ineffaceable, for it may be hoped that his powers of insight (which are likewise exceptional) will in the end convince him that persistent self-mutilation is senseless."

But more important than any of these things is the assertion that "in Nordic lands we can trust the word of a manual worker: the trains run according to schedule, the public officials are helpful. In houses of entertainment we can leave our overcoat in the entry without fear that it will be stolen."

I regret your review did not see fit to publish these heartening and convincing facts, together with Dr. Lenz's assurance that we have nothing to fear from the barbarians. After all, as he points out, the Negroes are "strongly attracted to gee-gaws," "poor in imagination" and "frequently commit thefts." The Mongols are "passive, imitative, and possess too much spiritual Mandarinism" (whatever that may mean). The Mediterranean races are "cruel" and even "frivolous."

Human Heredity ought to be in the hands of every elector. The result of the election would then be in no doubt—a National Government with "Nordic" characteristics would be returned at the polls and a calamity would be averted.—Yours, etc.,

Lincoln's Inn, W.C.2. MARY ADAMS.

P.S.—Perhaps it is unwise to give much publicity to the statement about the veracity of the manual worker.

Miscellany

A CHIME OF STARLINGS

AS you stand in front of the National Gallery or beside St. Martin-in-the-Fields waiting for your evening omnibus, you may hear faintly, above the roll and rattle of the traffic, the babble of a company of starlings. If you are country-born the sound of it will carry you on the wings of memory to some coppice on a southward sloping hill, or will conjure up a picture of a sheltered bed of withies or strong reeds near which you have watched the aerial convolutions of a winged multitude or listened to the starlings' bed-time chatter, which we used to call their chime. In fact, however, you are for the moment one of a crowd in a busy part of London, and, being a countryman, you will look up and will see the starlings outlining the window-tops and other projecting ledges of the National Gallery, grouped on the capitals surmounting the pillars of the church and snuggling beneath the shelter of its porch. There are few to be seen on the porch of the National Gallery or westward of it, and none round the corner towards St. Martin's Lane. Their choice of stations, based, no doubt, on experience, is, one may guess, governed chiefly by the shelter they afford from the ruder winds. Pigeons also resort to these two asylums, but the starlings keep themselves aloof.

They begin to arrive at about sundown. One Christmas Eve I watched them flighting in at about a quarter past four. Some had already settled, others were coming in in little companies—sometimes no more than five or six together, sometimes a dozen or perhaps a score. Each newly arrived company made as if to alight, then flew uneasily this way and that, seeking, I judged, free space where they could alight without being separated. They arrive in silence, but you can see by the movements of their heads that the new arrivals, as soon as they alight, join in the general chatter. When all have come to rest you get the impression of friezes of little bronze birds along the face of the National Gallery. It is hard to estimate the number of starlings which assemble nightly on these two buildings; but there must be many hundreds of them, and this is but one of many such congregations of starlings in various parts of London.

Such assemblies as these are, however, as nothing in comparison with the hosts you may see and hear at one of the chosen resorts of starlings in the country, especially in the early autumn months. They are more or less gregarious at all times except during the nesting season. You will generally find them feeding in small or large companies. Just after the nesting time they are usually seen in family parties, but later they gather in considerable flocks, often in association with rooks, pigeons or plovers. It is not till about harvest time that they begin, as the day closes, to flight from all directions to a chosen trysting-place and to form themselves into one of those astounding conclaves familiar to every observer of bird life. Then, indeed, you may witness a miracle of birds.

The autumn assemblies are by far the greatest, for, although they continue to consort together at night, throughout the winter, the numbers at each meeting place are greatly diminished before spring arrives. It may be assumed with some confidence that a large proportion of the autumn flocks migrate before winter to more congenial climes and of those that remain and of the newcomers that probably join them from further north, the various hazards of winter life take their toll. It has been estimated that at some favoured spots millions of starlings assemble. Many a time I have listened to a chime of starlings, but only on one occasion can I claim to have risen before sunrise to visit their trysting-place. I had one companion, a friend who, like myself, found joy in the life of birds. The starlings' roost was about a mile and a half from his house—a good-sized coppice on a slope of the downs so placed that it faced almost due south, and was snugly sheltered from the winds that might blow from any other quarter by two enfolding buttresses of down thrown out to east and west. Here there assembled, autumn after autumn, the greatest gatherings of starlings I have ever seen. One day, as we watched them from some distance wheeling in the air, it crossed our minds that we had never watched them settle or heard their chime to the end. So it was agreed that next day we would devote the evening to the study of the starlings, and I would spend the following night at his house.

It was a fine evening early in September. We sat down near the coppice at about sundown. Already a countless multitude of starlings was manœuvring high above us, and fresh companies—some of them large flocks—hurried to join it from every point of the compass. Each newly arrived company was instantly absorbed in the main body and the main body moved with apparently but one mind. It was almost impossible to believe that it did not respond to the word of command of a single leader. Sometimes the company would close its ranks and become an apparently solid globe, sometimes it would spread into a long skein, streaming along with regular undulations; sometimes they would mount vertically, at others they would dive suddenly earthwards only to sweep upwards again in a series of complicated evolutions. Then, at last, as the daylight faded they swooped with one sustained rush, and with a roar of wings like rolling thunder, straight into the coppice. They settled so quickly that one felt that each bird must have his appointed perch.

And immediately the chime rang out—a really deafening babel, and yet pervaded by a certain bell-like quality. It is not beautiful; but if ever you get the chance to hear about a million starlings talking at once it is an experience not to be missed. What is it all about? That is the question that has constantly intrigued me. Some speak of it as scolding, and suggest that they are wrangling over their perches. But in that case surely there would be not only

alarums, but excursions, and we detected no signs of such. Besides, if you watch the starlings chattering on the National Gallery you may see their heads move, but little else. They may be recounting the experiences of the day—all talking and none listening—but I think we may be content to regard the chime as a sort of chorus of praise and thanksgiving—an expression of contentment as involuntary as the purr of a cat.

We had intended to stay till the chime was over; but the twilight lingered—in London they talk long after the lamps are lighted—and at length, becoming hungry and losing patience, we gave up our vigil, resolving at the same time to rise before dawn and see them go away. And this we did. Awakened by alarm clocks, we rose in the dark and arrived at the coppice as the sky was turning slightly grey. There was no wind, and the coppice was as silent as the grave. Slowly the dawn spread, and one began to see the details of trees and bushes; then a soft, low whistle sounded within. One could imagine a starling stretching himself and yawning. But it may have been a signal for after the briefest interval the chatter of the previous evening was resumed in a sudden, startling diapason. How long we listened to this morning chorus I hesitate to say, but it must have lasted no less than half an hour, and it was near sunrise when it ended as abruptly as it had begun—as completely and precisely as the strains of a well-drilled orchestra when the conductor lowers his baton on the final chord. An instant's silence followed; then, with a deep roar of wings, a mass of starlings rose skyward, and almost immediately melted, as company after company emerged from it and flew rapidly out of sight each to its appointed destination. Well content with the reward of our matutinal effort we rose to our feet, never doubting but that the starlings had left the wood, as they had entered it, in a single host. But suddenly within the copse the chime rang out again, and the volume of sound appeared to us no less. But this was no more than the briefest anthem and, at the end of a few minutes, the conductor's baton fell again, there was the same abrupt silence, the same rush of wings, and a second mass of birds departed like the first. We watched them away; then, as there was no further sound from the wood, we walked through it and found not a single bird.

In most parts of these islands starlings are now one of the commonest of all birds greatly to our advantage. Except during the fruit harvest, their feeding habits are beneficial, for they are indefatigable hunters of grubs and insects harmful to farms and gardens, and they do good service among sheep and cattle by removing parasites. These services more than set off their bold and destructive raids on fruit farms and orchards, and make up for the time and trouble that must be spent in driving them from forbidden spoils and though the exasperated fruit farmer may be forgiven for having recourse occasionally to powder and shot, it is to be hoped that no modern " sportsman " will arise to blow off the great double gun into their midst when their morning hymn is barely finished and their destination—whether for good or for ill—is not revealed. For even when the fruit is ripe they are not all robbers.

MORYS GASCOYEN.

BRITISH OPERA

THE present season of opera in English at Covent Garden is one of the longest and most ambitious we have had in London of recent years. It is a great step forward in organisation that this British Opera Company is under the same management as that of the international season at Covent Garden every year, namely, the Covent Garden Opera Syndicate, and that this enables it to have use of Covent Garden Opera House and its properties. At the end of the present season this week the company goes on tour through the provinces beginning at Glasgow on October 29th, and then proceeding to Edinburgh, Liverpool and Birmingham.

Under the present regime there is a hope of establishing a permanent school of opera for British singers and musicians. When one considers what an enormous increase there has been in recent years in the audiences for music as shown at the Promenade and other concerts and through the B.B.C., it ought to be possible to establish at least one good opera company in this country giving regular performances in London and the rest of Great Britain. But in order to achieve this result it will be necessary for the Syndicate to make certain alterations and improvements, and I should like to make some suggestions arising from the present season. First of all, to speak from the business side, the Syndicate ought to arrange for better publicity. Seeing that the Syndicate has a working arrangement with the B.B.C. and receives a grant in return for the right to broadcast performances, the opening of the autumn season of opera in English at Covent Garden ought to be fixed for the Monday after the final Saturday of the Promenade Concerts at the Queen's Hall, and all the Promenade programmes should contain announcements throughout the season of the forthcoming operatic performances. There is no reason at all why the whole of the Promenade audiences should not become patrons of opera at Covent Garden. It only requires the right publicity, for the operatic performances of the British Opera Company are quite on a level with the orchestral performances of the Promenade Concerts, and everybody who knows anything from the inside of the running of these concerts is aware of the enormous part which the right sort of publicity plays in their success.

The next important business point is that of the prices. It would be absurd for the Covent Garden Syndicate to imagine that they can nowadays with the present company of British singers attract to Covent Garden for a season of opera in English the audience which fills the boxes and the expensive seats at Covent Garden during the international season. The difference in quality is too great for one thing. No doubt this difference is not perceptible to a large proportion of the audience but those who know have given its reputation to the international season and the others follow like sheep. Also the international season has another function. It is a social as well as an artistic event, and in our present state of civilisation this function has its uses and is not to be ignorantly despised. Remembering these facts, the Syndicate must lower its prices so that its seasons of opera in English at Covent Garden are well on the Promenade Concerts level. Of course it is not possible to have a scale of prices quite as low as those of the Promenades, but I suggest a serious effort should be made to reduce the most expensive seats to 10s. or 7s. 6d. The prices arranged at the beginning of the present season were from 15s. (orchestra stalls) to 2s. (gallery unreserved), but these are too high, and if the prices ranged from 10s. to 2s. I would expect to see Covent Garden filled every night provided the proper publicity was given to the performances. In a theatre with such good acoustics as Covent Garden, a theatre whose auditorium is so beautifully proportioned that nobody, except in the gallery, is stuck away under a low shelving roof, as in too many modern theatres, there is very little to choose between one seat and another. It has been a tradition that opera should be more expensive than drama, but our theatre prices in London are ridiculously high and ought to be cut at least fifty per cent. What keeps them high is merely that the theatre business has become a gambling centre where speculators stake small fortunes on each production. This system, which has ruined drama and has made experiment impossible, is fortunately inapplicable to opera, which exists solely on a classic repertory basis. Therefore the Covent Garden Syndicate should go boldly ahead resting on the firm ground of the B.B.C. grant and cut admission prices ruthlessly so that the hundreds of thou-

sands of music lovers in London may be able to afford a visit to the opera once a week, where they will get far better entertainment than at any theatre or cinema.

And now I come to the artistic side. I must say at once that there is a good deal of talent in this British Opera Company. I have heard many worse tenors in international seasons than Mr. Ben Williams, whose Don José in *Carmen* was a thoroughly enjoyable effort. Mr. Williams is also young and ought, if he is serious and takes pains, to become better and better. Mr. Arthur Fear is another singer who has the standards of an artist and is not merely one of the multitudinous race of backboneless English baritones. I have not space to name all the singers in this company whose work deserves praise; nor is it merely a case of the company possessing some good individual singers. It can achieve a praiseworthy degree of ensemble work. I consider the present production of Rossini's *Barber of Seville* a most creditable and enjoyable one from every point of view. Important but relatively minor parts, such as that of Don Basilio, were excellently done; nor was the coloratura singing of Nora Gruhn as Rosina without merit.

But there are also serious faults. Nobody would know sometimes that these operas were being sung in English. This is disastrous and it is a measure of the singing. Good singing and clear enunciation are inseparable. It is a fact that we English unfortunately do not know what good singing is. We bred during the nineteenth century a race of sentimental caterwaulers who slipped emotionally from note to note, and since their sloppy sliding up and down the scale in *Home Sweet Home*, *The Rosary*, and other gems of equal merit always brought tears and thunders of applause from their audience, they were never obliged to learn the difficult art of singing. Nowadays these songs have been replaced by the inverted sentiment of the jazz love-song, the coon ballad, and the fox-trot lullaby. But these songs and their singers are even more feeble, more invertebrate, and nothing but a strict hard discipline in Italian coloratura can save our singing. Somebody should be appointed by the Syndicate to sit at rehearsal at the back of the auditorium at Covent Garden with a police whistle and to blow ruthlessly whenever a singer's words are inaudible. The result of one season's training on these lines would be magical. Packed houses would crowd to hear and enjoy the wit and beauty of such masterpieces as *The Barber of Seville* and *Die Fledermaus*, which at present might as well be sung in Chinese.

W. J. TURNER.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Tenuous Poetry

The Fountain of Youth, by the Brothers Quintero, produced last week at the Everyman Theatre, is a poetic drama, and in the original Spanish it evidently depended largely on the play of subtle and stylised language for the expression of its moods. To attempt a translation was daring. Mr. Samuel N. Baker has no doubt done his best; but the English often sounds prosy and pretentious. There are only two characters, and the three acts deal with their only meetings, once in youth, once in middle age and the last in old age, when their passion is dead. There is beauty in the way the prevailing mood of sadness is developed, and yet a certain feeling of inconsequence rather than tragedy when the desire of the lovers, platonic by fate and not choice, remains unfulfilled.

Murder for News

The rising young journalist is, so his newspaper-lord suggests, without that essential spark which makes big business men. For instance, why hasn't he thought of implicating himself as the murderer on the boat express? Smarting under the criticism, he quickly gets himself arrested, and his impressions as "famous war correspondent awaiting verdict of his trial for murder" soon exceed his wildest hopes. So far as the newspaper-lord is concerned, the question merely resolves itself into one of "how many thousand daily circulation is a man's life worth?" The idea of Mr. Bennett's play at the Lyceum is good, and the technique with which it is worked out is complicated and ingenious enough to satisfy anybody. There are four murders of assorted kinds, and they all take place on the stage in a clean, comfortable manner. Most of the old fittings and fixtures of the thriller have a place, such as diamonds, a sliding panel and a butler, and there are some of the newer ones as well. The acting is quick and faultless, and those with a taste for anything from a tough guy to a criminal court should hurry to the Lyceum.

From Bayswater to Hollywood

Mr. Benn Levy and Mr. Van Druten have collaborated in giving us an amusing satire on Hollywood. The title *Hollywood Holiday*, coupled with the name of Miss Jean Cadell, supplies an almost complete description of this comedy. The story of an elderly, unemployed governess living in a second-rate boarding-house, paid large sums of money by film magnates to spend a few weeks in Hollywood, for purely political reasons, and ending up by selling them a novel and returning to her boarding-house in Bayswater, provides a good course for Miss Cadell to run. So good, in fact, that at times it becomes rather a flat race. Miss Cadell prattled and laughed at her own prattling all the way down the course, but an actress of her ability is capable of taking more hurdles.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Saturday, October 24th—
Robert Mayer, Concert for Children, Central Hall, Westminster, 11.
Royal Choral Society, "Elijah," conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent, Albert Hall, 2.30.
Egon Petri, Piano Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.
Backhaus, Beethoven Programme, Grotrian Hall, 3.15.
Mr. A. S. G. Butler on "Tendencies in Very Modern Buildings," R.I.B.A., 9, Conduit Street, 3.

Sunday, October 25th—
W. Stephen Sanders, M.P., on "Can We Solve the World's Economic Problem?" Conway Hall, 11.

Monday, October 26th—
London Symphony Orchestra, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
Joseph Schwartz. Piano Recital, Aeolian Hall, 8.30.

Tuesday, October 27th—
Prof. Graham Wallas on "Francis Place," Morley College, 8.

Wednesday, October 28th—
"Well Caught," by Anthony Armstrong, Embassy Theatre.
B.B.C. Symphony Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

Thursday, October 29th—
F. J. C. Hearnshaw on "Herbert Spencer and the Individualists," King's College, 5.15.

Friday, October 30th—
Boris Schwartz, Violin Recital, Aeolian Hall, 8.30.

THOMAS ALVA EDISON,

1847—1931

HIS genius he was quite content
In one brief sentence to define:
"Of inspiration one per cent.,
Of perspiration ninety-nine."

A humble boast: but humbler yet
We felt, who heard, and knew full fine
One drop of that immortal sweat
Was worth a sea of yours or mine.

JAN STRUTHER.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

IT has been a difficult week. This is not the page for politics, and so I will only say that natural and personal annoyance at this meaningless, ambitious election was much exacerbated by a week-end in the Cotswolds, and the expected discovery that plain people—people who earn their living—in the country are as furious and bewildered by the Government's action as are plain people in the town. Like the rest of the world, they have an uneasy suspicion that banking is as banking does, and that something is wrong with our cash. Still, in England we find it easier perhaps to turn away our minds from these things to football or to books; and so I left the problems of the situation and turned to letters. I turned, to be more specific, to an author who since his first volume—*Liza of Lambeth*—has not displayed much knowledge of any people save those with secure incomes, plenty of leisure and not quite enough intelligence to justify that leisure. In the preface to his *Collected Plays* (Vols. I and II, Heinemann, 5s. net.) and in many places in his new volume of short stories (*First Person Singular*, Heinemann, 7s. 6d.), Mr. Somerset Maugham shows clearly enough that he does not think he has had justice from the serious critics. He is right, though not all are guilty. I was too young to review his early books, but I remember praising, possibly to excess, while I was at school, that remarkable novel, *Mrs. Craddock*; and I anticipated, though I did not provoke, the success of his one great book, *Of Human Bondage*, in a review in an English newspaper. Justice has not yet, I think, been done to that quiet, limited and exquisite book, *On a Chinese Screen*; and few theatre-goers could tell you the difference between Mr. Maugham's best plays and the popular successes of more immediate and momentary wits.

* * *

Yet I am forced to admit that a good deal of his lack of "high brow" reputation is Mr. Maugham's own fault; just as I am forced to suspect that some odd twinge of vanity in his character would make him claim—by ever so suggestive a meiosis, of course—a rather more considerable position than would be given him by an unbiased criticism. Here comes, if I may be allowed a digression, the second disaster of the week. I was in the middle of Mr. Maugham—I was in the second act of that excellent, brilliantly insincere comedy, *Smith*, when I picked up a fascinating little volume *The Diary of a Child's Life* (Gyldendal, 6s.). In this book Mr. Vilhelm Rasmussen gives an account of his daughter's life, up to the age of 15 years. And Sonia, when she was six and a half years old, said to her parents "I wish my doll could come alive, but she can't . . . but one can get a certain amount of fun out of her, anyway." It's pretty devastating, isn't it? For a time it completely spoiled my appreciation of *Smith*, and *The Land of Promise* and *Jack Straw*; for all these clever plays of Mr. Maugham's belong so definitely to the order of artistic creation where lived the doll of Sonia Rasmussen. One gets a certain amount of fun out of them, but how despondently are the people in them not alive. How carefully, I am tempted to say, does Mr. Maugham work to keep them not alive; to keep them controlled, elegant, mannered, obedient, securely free from that dreadful and dangerous event when an author's characters, by assuming life, take charge of him and his ideas, and compel him to go where he would not. It is this harsh regimen of Mr. Maugham's which has so often prevented him from allowing his genius its proper freedom. An imaginative timidity supervenes, just as the characters are about to take life upon them, and he murmurs, with a disconsolate gaiety "I wish my doll would come alive, but she can't . . . but one can get a certain amount of fun out of her, anyway."

Yet at times, I think, Mr. Maugham is almost persuaded that his creatures are alive; or is it that he cannot see the life that quickens in the veins of the masters, not only the masters in another method than his, but such a novelist as Thackeray, such a dramatist as Shaw or Barrie, even though the life-blood in their characters tends to be either too cerebral or too—shall I say—central, and not enough of the heart, the symbol of a whole man. Mr. Maugham claims that he has been a high-brow. The truth is that he has never ceased to be one; but he has, as do all high-brows who have to earn a living, not infrequently written on a level below his own intellectual respect. "High-brow" is not the equivalent of "cultured." Only mistaken kindness would use the two words as synonyms. A high-brow is properly a man who believes that his culture gives him certain superior rights. Such men are commonest in educational academies; and here, in my experience, the village school is as bad as the most pretentious of Oxford or Cambridge colleges. Mr. Maugham has always had a taint of this tiresome superiority, and he is never so conscious of it as when he is forsaking its standards and condescending to those of less intellectual attainment. It is this which keeps his plays from achieving the light-hearted caprice of authors who have not half his technical equipment; it is this which prevents his characters from coming properly to life. He cannot afford to allow any such disconcerting behaviour.

* * *

The disappearance of God has had a very disastrous effect on the art of fiction. I believe the effect would anyhow have been devastating; but it has been grievously enhanced by the fact that those who have lost God have not found any substitute. "Progress" in this connection is a meaningless word, and since the death of Thomas Hardy there has been no conspicuous believer in Destiny, or even in Caprice. A faint and doubtful trust in the self has been shattered by the modern psychologists, and only a few ardent anthropologists can find comfort in a group-consciousness as lively as the atmosphere of an aquarium, the chief delights of which are always, I suspect, for the beholder rather than for the inhabitant. It is an aquarium life which Mr. Maugham shows us. The creatures of *First Person Singular* live in a different element from ours, and our interest in them is one of curiosity, not of sympathy or of anger. Might not the same be said of Thackeray's world? Not justly. Thackeray, as he makes sufficiently plain, believed in God. He had, that is, and expected his readers to have, standards by which the behaviour of his creatures could be judged. Without some such criterion, serious drama and fiction become impossible. The emotional and spiritual appeal of great plays and great novels depends on our readiness and our ability to criticise and appreciate the people in them: we must apportion blame and praise. In actual life, even if we have lost sight of God, our convenience compels us to this action—indifference is removed by our interest. If, however, an artist loses sight of God, triviality is bound to supervene, and boredom, and chiefly that frigid artificiality that makes him and his readers heedless of the lives he is portraying. Hence springs the astonishing frivolity of so much of modern art; and hence, too, the exaggerated importance a godless but god-desiring world pays to authors who cannot forget God—James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, T. F. Powys, Eugene O'Neill. Their God may be a god of whirlwind and fire; but their work and its success testifies to the fact that those who look in art for more than ornament, or mere sensuous delectation, cannot find it except in works where the artist is conscious of standards that he can never attain unto. There is a pitiful competence, a null deftness in *First Person Singular*; that there are no surprises for the reader does not much matter, but it is a terrible thing that the reader can feel sure that there were in these stories no surprises for Mr. Somerset Maugham.

RICHARD SUNNE.

NEW NOVELS

The Trap. By ALLEN HAVERS. Hogarth Press. 10s. 6d.
The Dark Duty. By MARGARET WILSON. Cape. 7s. 6d.
The Wild Orchid. By SIGRID UNDSET. Cassell. 8s. 6d.
She Closed the Door. By ELIOT HODGKIN. Constable. 7s. 6d.
Herrin' Jennie. By EDWARD ALBERT. Nicholson and Watson. 7s. 6d.
The Old Woman Talks. By F. O. MANN. Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.
The Running Footman. By JOHN OWEN. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

The Trap is something you will have heard of before—a war-book. The ground is fought over battle by battle, the time accounted for year by year and month by month. It is a peculiarly single-minded book, by an author who appears to be without personal ambition to exploit his own powers or the mere sensationalism of his subject; his sole concern is to hold his mirror so that it takes in the gigantic episode from end to end. It may need more ignorance, and therefore curiosity, in regard to the war than present generations can well be possessed of to follow actual facts with the interest aroused by the unknown. ("The Armistice with Austria was signed on November 3rd" is a sentence, for instance, that cannot burst its news upon the ear.) But the author has set out to reflect exactly the causes and course of the war in order to realise with exactitude its moral implications. And the sobriety, comprehensiveness, decency of his version of war-history act as a kind of purchasing-power for the making of as important a version of war's reaction on the human being as has yet been given. And though the book's tone of historical affirmation may not be necessary to us in the matter of a date, when it comes to dealing with a war-time husband and wife that same accurate statement has an infinite value. The characters as a whole are interesting, various and convincing, thoroughly belonging to the nation, movement or condition which they represent. But it is in Ian Fisher and his wife Rachel, whose passionate romance is interrupted in its beginning, that the reader follows the war as into a deep recess, not explored before, stepping from hard date-like facts into the subtleties of human feeling, and seeming only to gain in actuality. Equally sensitive to its horrors, one of the two is convinced against war, the other unconvinced. Abjuring his convictions, Ian Fisher fights, and is returned a wrecked man to his wife, capable of tenderness, incapable of passion.

> The worst of it was that this dread inertia of his became at times so irritating. His slowness exasperated not only his wife but others still more. She concealed her annoyance; they did not. Once when he was buying tickets for the Tube he was so slow and fumbling the man behind him broke out: "Oh, for goodness sake get a move on!" To this had the war brought her beloved's tremendous energy. The community had thrown back on her—the young woman still full of *her* creative energy—a husband whose husbandhood was dead; a man who was dead . . .

The tortured world shown in the prolongation of the war serves again as a great stepping-stone to the knowledge of the man and woman, tortured by all the implications which the book discloses, when he is due to return to the front. At the end of these six hundred and fifty pages of a comprehensive glance at a man in the light of a world at war, the reader will find his steps retraced from the particular to the general again, and the man that the world showed to him will in turn throw quite a considerable light upon the world.

Miss Margaret Wilson's book, also, is aimed at the human conscience. This vivid hour-to-hour account of a prison in the hours immediately preceding an execution makes no pretence of merely using this situation in the interests of fiction: it is the fiction that is used. It is always difficult to be quite at one's ease over an attempt to saddle the freedom of story-writing with the rigid precision demanded of sociological argument. A really saintly sense of honour is expected of the story, not to presume upon its privileges. One watches the author as one watches a conjuror, not simply to appreciate, but to detect how one may be beguiled; and probably one is so sharp as to discover the sleight of hand in the place where it has not occurred. However, the man who considers that Miss Wilson has used her story unwarrantably for the purpose of making out her case would suspect the conjuror of wearing a false face. It is true that her disbelief in punishment makes a kind of direction in which the blood of all her characters must flow, but it flows through real, credible flesh. The victims of punishment in general, and capital punishment in particular, that Miss Wilson is concerned with are not so much the imprisoned as the imprisoners; the murderer is left to himself in his cell, while the real condemned man is the Governor, under sentence of carrying out his first execution.

In Sigrid Undset's story of ordinary domestic life there is that essential, whole-hearted quality which makes each one of this author's books seem the one book she had to write. While you are reading about Paul Selmer you will be sure that this is the young man above all others whose life his author was compelled to record; it is impossible that anything else could matter to her so much. Paul's attractions for the reader are considerable, and he has sufficient weight as a personality to be a fitting medium for his creator's discovery of life. Sigrid Undset actually gives an impression of creating love and politics and religion and commerce, in creating him. The news of all these things is fresh—the first news. Snow, and a spring morning, and streets and houses are seen for the first time, and a young man's passionate and chivalrous love of a weak girl, and his reluctant but unavoidable exploration of religion. How much book-writing is necessary to write the book that has just heard of life?

Such a book could not exist without an acute awareness of what is finest in human nature; but Mr. Eliot Hodgkin's book, *She Closed The Door*, could not exist without human nature's foibles, even its aspidistra. These are quite essential to him; his talent has been brought up on them. His main character, Victor Marsh, an artist who also advises the rich as to house-decoration, has "a bright new smartness and a gilt young culture," but "a core of sober reality and good sense." These combined qualities are enough to make him witty and effective in dialogue, but not to prevent his making a dissolute hash of his life. Mr. Hodgkin gives a clever presentation of all his characters. The girl, Alice, who nearly saved Victor, but alienated him by even a mere mention of the word Duty, is in fact too interesting and attractive to have failed with him. And her mother, "more easily ridiculed than replaced," whose appearance suggested that "into the mask of a Roman Emperor someone had poured a full molten measure of femininity," whose profile, too, "more appositely even than that of our King might have found a place on our coinage," and whose offer to Alice at breakfast of tea as an alternative to the coffee provided, "arose more from a willingness to discipline the servants than from any wish to pamper her daughter," is faithfully conceived, compact of foibles. The vernacular and psychology of the bridge-table, and of a country-house tea-hour, and a cocktail party have the right sound; Mr. Hodgkin, indeed, can make one believe whatever he says.

The next two books are not for the same reader as the last one. They are prolific, somewhat sentimentalised, stories of "low life." *Herrin' Jennie*, never hard up for a brightly concocted incident,

fills Edinburgh streets with a population of those whose rough exteriors conceal honest hearts. In *An Old Woman Talks*, a long last-illness reminiscence of a long life and long family by a not-interesting old woman is in this style: "Perhaps, all in all, she hadn't been too bad a wife to him? She'd tried to do her best often enough, but she had a quick tongue and, God knows, in this world it's hard enough to show one-quarter of the kindness you intend . . ." The book is handicapped by the long wordiness of the monotone.

It is Mr. Owen's story, *The Running Footman*, that, more than any other of these books, gives us a performance of the pure art of fiction. It has invention, a style, an idiom; it is not tacked on to this or that condition of life by comment or argument; it is something created of itself, and very faultlessly done. A running footman, two centuries ago, doing such runs as eighty miles in a couple of days in front of his master's coach, crying room for his lord, has now a sound almost of the fantasy that Mr. Owen required, to let his very characteristic and moving fancy work at its own will. The footman, like a touching love-sick pierrot, watching others love, or bursting his heart and lungs upon the road, is an unforgettable figure of the spurned and victimised—a pale, panting Petroushka on the run.

VIOLA MEYNELL.

THE REBEL SAINT

James Nayler: the Rebel Saint. By EMILIA FOGELKLOU. Translated from the Swedish by LAJLA YAPP. Benn. 15s.

Here is a record and a study, carefully documented and written with conspicuous intelligence, of one of the most striking figures in seventeenth century England. Much has been heard of George Fox, the inspired cobbler; comparatively little of James Nayler, who was successively his ardent disciple, unwilling rival, and excommunicant. Yet the contact and conflict between these men provides a highly dramatic chapter in that history of Early Quakerism which is itself a vitally important chapter in the history of religion. Of the two men, Nayler is at once the more complex and the more lovable. If he was weaker, he was also gentler; if he possessed less practical wisdom and was liable to lose his mental balance in a way repugnant to Fox's robust commonsense, he had yet the more delicate spiritual perception. In Fox's nature the zeal of the prophet was admixed with something of the shrewdness of a successful politician. With all his courage and unworldly enthusiasm he had a head for policy and a talent for leadership, and the tragic paradox of his career is that his first high purpose was finally, in some measure, defeated by his own success. Beginning as the liberator of the individual conscience, a witness for "the Inner Light" as against bibliolatry and institutionalism, he ended as the autocrat of a sect. He did not, indeed, take to himself the hysterical adulation of his followers; his ambition was not personal; but he seems to have accepted very readily, and wielded with some arrogance, the authority thrust upon him. To Nayler, who loved and revered him, he was something less than generous; and the story of Nayler's final and absolute submission to him leaves the defeated Nayler with all the honours of a great spiritual victory, a fact of which Fox, to the end of his life, remained serenely and complacently unaware.

It is a fascinating story, rich material both for the psychologist and for the connoisseur in irony; and Dr. Fogelklou is worthy of her subject. Under her skilful guidance we watch events moving inevitably to disaster, and cannot fail to reflect that if only this or that had been otherwise, all might have been well between these two men of genius, whose quarrel, for a time, divided Quakerism into two hostile factions, and, but for Nayler's saintly humbling of himself, would have divided it permanently. If only—one is inclined to say—if only they could have seen and spoken with each other at that critical moment when the infatuated Martha Simmonds began her mischief-making campaign! For here were all the elements of an ideal partnership: Fox with his dynamic power and sincerity, and the silver-tongued Nayler who, though several years his senior, looked upon him as his father in God. But Fox, for the convenience of Cromwell the Protector, was in prison—"one of the worst prisons of seventeenth century England"—and Nayler, without seeking the office, had become the acknowledged leader of the London Quakers. Dr. Fogelklou's narrative does not make it quite clear to me how the rift in their affection was first made, but it is abundantly clear how it was widened. Nayler, whether through vanity or through an excess of gentleness we cannot be sure, had allowed himself to become the idol of a group of adoring women, chief among whom was one, Martha Simmonds, who had fallen foul of the other Quaker leaders and provided herself with a standing grievance against them. It was Martha Simmonds—the Iago in this drama, though without the insane malice of Iago—who visited Fox in prison, told him that his heart was rotten and his leadership a sham, and urged him to submit to Nayler. Fox took her to be an emissary from Nayler, who in fact was quite ignorant of her mischievous enterprise; and this misconception took firm root in his mind and was no doubt the cause of that unbending hostility to Nayler which persisted in him through all the critical years of Nayler's life. He retorted with anger, and all attempts at reconciliation were defeated—by circumstances, by further misunderstandings, by a hardening of the heart, and by the industrious Martha. Nayler, meanwhile, was going from bad to worse. Enthusiasm, taking advantage of physical and nervous weakness, ravished him away from reality; and Martha Simmonds continued to play the part of evil genius. It was almost certainly she and her friends who persuaded him to ride into Bristol in a manner closely imitative of Christ's Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem, and it was they who, by continuing their fantastic ritual of adoration after his arrest on a charge of blasphemy, weighed down the scale in favour of his condemnation. There being no Blasphemy Act under which he could be legally indicted, a pious Parliament, after debating the matter for eleven days, decided to ignore the constitution. As many as eighty-two members, out of the hundred and seventy-eight who voted, were in favour of punishing him by death. Saved by this narrow margin of fourteen votes, Nayler was condemned to be "set on the pillory, with his head in the pillory, in the New Palace of Westminster, during the space of two hours" and to be whipped by the hangman through the streets of Westminster to the Old Exchange, London. This was Thursday's programme. On the following Saturday more pillory, followed by torture: his tongue was to be bored through with a hot iron and his forehead branded with the letter B. Further, lest this should prove to be an inadequate discouragement of wrong-doing, he was to be placed on the back of a horse with his face to the tail and whipped through the streets of Bristol, the scene of his crazy triumph, and thence committed to prison and held "till he be released by Parliament." This sentence was duly carried out—notable work on the part of men proud of having established "religious liberty."

Not only was the sentence ferocious: the verdict was contrary to the evidence. Nayler's answers to his accusers make it plain beyond doubt that his intention was not blasphemous. What he did, or suffered to be done, was no more than a "sign," a piece of devotional play-acting. Not he himself, but the "seed of God" in him, was the object of veneration. On his release from prison, some three years later, he was allowed to re-enter the Communion of Friends and to resume his preaching. Fox, however, wished him out of London. Nayler interpreted this command, the motive behind which it would be painful to seek out, as "leave to go home to his wife and children." A few days after his setting out he was found, ill and exhausted, lying in a field by the roadside. He was carried to a Friend's house and there died. A few hours before his death he summed up his religious faith in words which must be quoted in full:

> There is a Spirit which I feel, that delights to do no Evil, nor to revenge any Wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the End: Its hope is to outlive all Wrath and Contention, and to weary out all Exaltation and Cruelty, or whatever is of a Nature contrary to itself. It sees to the End of all Temptations: As it bears no Evil in itself, so it conceives none in Thoughts to any other: If it be betrayed it bears it; for its Ground and Spring is the Mercies and Forgiveness of God. Its Crown is Meekness, its Life is Everlasting Love unfeigned, and takes its Kingdom with Intreaty and not with Contention, and keeps it by lowliness of Mind. In God alone it can rejoyce, though none else regard it, or can own its Life. It's conceived in Sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it; nor doth it murmur at Grief and Oppression. It never rejoyceth, but through Sufferings; for with the World's Joy it is murthered. I found it alone, being forsaken; I have Fellowship therein, with them who lived in Dens, and desolate places in the Earth, who through Death obtained this Resurrection and Eternal Holy Life.

This was the last public utterance of one who (as an eye-witness tells us) had borne branding and the boring of his tongue "with

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FINANCIAL NEWS

LONGMANS

astonishing and heart-melting patience," and had suffered with forbearance the enmity of his beloved George Fox. Were nothing else known of him, it would surely have sufficed to perpetuate his memory. GERALD BULLETT.

THE STORY-TELLER

Minnie Maylow's Story and Other Tales and Sketches. By JOHN MASEFIELD. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

Gusto; simplicity; a spring-like delight in and picturing of natural beauty; an impassioned feeling for human nobility; a shrewd interest in man's whimsies and conceits; and a breath-taking, heady power of speech—these are the characteristics which make the Poet Laureate one of the most representative of our poets since Chaucer. Others since him have been good story-tellers; one, as Landor said, approached that great master of our poetry, and Browning's gift for characterisation is greater than Mr. Masefield's, but his talent for swift tale-telling not so remarkable. Mr. Masefield is pleasantly aware, as a story-teller should be, of his audience. He can catch a wandering attention, and is quick to gain it afresh with some sudden change of manner. This awareness of the audience, and respect for them, make him a most companionable poet. How sympathetic is his account in the title-story of the man who bored the King:

> Some old general coming to report
> On army remounts at his frontier fort.
> Men with most dreary tales of old attacks,
> With half their brains gouged by the battle-axe;
> Or ministers with courtesies in their spines,
> Or Labour members telling about mines;
> Or scarlet admirals whose breezy tone
> Made the King thankful to be left alone.

Nearly all the poems are stories; but few are without that personal, philosophical note which Mr. Masefield has always given to his work. The historical and legendary pieces, treating of such different personages as Odysseus, Tristan, Whittington, Henry and Rosamund, Henry the Eighth, Brutos of Troy and Britain, are all seen through a temperament—they do not rely on convention or revolt, but on Mr. Masefield's own acceptance of the traditions which are so lovely a part of our heritage. His strength rests in his refusal to part from the traditions, while he never slackens in his interest in a knowledge of those unnamed and unrecorded ones to whom the tradition is only a vague rumour, but who are often more properly its heirs and defenders than are the learned. The poem in which Harry, Katherine of Aragon, Wolsey and Anne Bullen all come before the Seeker and make their pleas is an extraordinary piece of successful compression, giving in vivid images and fine verse an epitome of one of the most moving times in our history. He gives us Harry Tudor in a few words of Katherine's:

> Not reverencing aught that stood
> Between him and a fancied good,
> His want was master of his will.

Lovelier is the poem which tells once more the legend of Rosamund and Eleanor the Queen, though Mr. Masefield is perhaps a shade too delicate in his presentation of Rosamund Clifford, a shade too biased in his portrait of Eleanor, the King's wife and prisoner. In this, and more notably in *Tristan's Singing*, Mr. Masefield shows all his old skill in colour and pattern, and in the sudden rise from picture to image, from image to symbol until what began as a stream of beauty ends in the threat and splendour of the waterfall:

> Joy made the spirit within Tristan thrill,
> Rapture was his again and peace and power
> And all were singing on the holy hill,
> Bird, beast and spirit, grass and mossy stone,
> Joy, yet foretelling greater joy unknown.
>
> And then upon the summit of the year
> So burning blue, so crooning with the dove,
> Nature herself swept thither with her spear,
> Nature the naked swiftness, fierce as love,
> With mad eyes full of lightning, striking fear,
> Hawk-ey'd she was, wing-footed, antler-helm'd,
> Compact of joy that drew and overwhelmed.

With each year is published more verse that is difficult to read, and with a poetic content that neither convinces nor persuades; many will welcome this volume of the Poet Laureate's in which we have verse that can be read with pleasure, and through which again and again beauty is evident.

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GOLD AND THE CRISIS

This Gold Crisis. By F. W. PETHICK-LAWRENCE. Gollancz. 3s. 6d.

Papers on Gold and the Price Level. By SIR JOSIAH STAMP. King. 7s. 6d.

As the hypochondriac amasses a medical library, we are all nowadays reading little books about gold and banking. Or, rather, there are two differences; for our disease is real and not imaginary, and there is no equivalent to the General Medical Council to prevent unauthorised practitioners eager to prescribe a cure. Economists correspond to doctors; but who is to declare who are economists, and who are not? Doctors proverbially differ; but those who prescribe for our economic ailments differ even more.

Yet this is not because there is no stable body of clearly demonstrated economic ideas. It is much to be regretted that certainty has not been carried to a point beyond that which has been reached; but up to a point certainty does exist, and there are some economic propositions that no one disputes except for want of training. In the present world crisis, in which we have all to be practical economists of a sort, it is of the first importance that these all too scanty certainties should be constantly forced upon our notice.

Two certainties especially, in relation to the matter now in hand, cannot be too often repeated. The first is that if the supply of means of payment is increased out of relation to the quantity of transactions needing to be financed, prices are bound to rise *somewhere*, no matter what efforts may be made to hold them down. The second is that falling prices always operate to some extent as a discouragement to production, and that persistently falling prices are inconsistent with economic prosperity, unless at least productivity is advancing both evenly and faster than prices fall.

Both the books before me lay the greatest emphasis on this question of prices. Both authors believe a persistently falling

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price level (to whatever causes it may be due itself) to be the immediate cause that has been most at work in the present world slump, and both stress, above all else, the need for a policy that will effectively stabilise prices, not so as to hold them rigid absolutely, but so as to counteract any persistent tendency for the general price level to rise or fall. And both are agreed that the cause of falling general prices is mainly monetary in origin, and that accordingly the corrective must be sought in a changed monetary policy.

The structure and aim of the two books is, however, very different. Sir Josiah Stamp's is a volume of collected papers and addresses, in which the reader can see him gradually feeling his way—often, alas! too late—towards a clearer view of monetary conditions. Uppermost in his mind is always the question of price-stability; but it took him a long and painful effort to realise how little such a policy can be reconciled with the gold standard, save on a totally transformed basis of international management to which there has been as yet, despite the Genoa Conference decisions of nearly a decade ago, almost no approach. Sir Josiah Stamp's volume is an economist's Odyssey; but the author would, I am sure, agree that he is not nearly home yet, and the suitors still unslain.

Mr. Pethick-Lawrence's book has a different purpose. It is an attempt to explain in the simplest possible language the economic causes which lie at the back of the present crisis in Great Britain and in the world, and to narrate the story of the crisis in an easily intelligible way. In this it succeeds astonishingly well; for Mr. Pethick-Lawrence is a trained economist and yet entirely free from jargon. His facts are indisputable and lucidly stated, and his explanations of them, for the greater part, indisputably correct.

And yet both these books leave me with a feeling that the authors have over-simplified, not their presentation of the problem, but the problem itself in their own minds. For I am unable to share Mr. Pethick-Lawrence's conviction, which he goes so far as to print in capitals, that "unemployment as it exists to-day is not an economic but a monetary phenomenon." Others have said the same, I know; and I am far from denying the very great importance of the monetary factor. But is it clear that the fall in prices is *solely* due to monetary causes? Sir Josiah Stamp would certainly not go so far as to say this; and perhaps even Mr. Pethick-Lawrence does not mean to go quite so far, though he barely hints at the existence of other causes.

Still, Mr. Pethick-Lawrence's volume is eminently a book to be read, and that with profit. It contains far more that is certainly right than even possibly wrong; and no one can fairly complain that he is unable to understand it. Sir Josiah Stamp's book is less readable, as collections of occasional papers usually are. But there is good stuff in his volume, too, and, on the whole, a cogent personal defence of his open-mindedness and readiness to learn by experience—valuable qualities in an economist who has passed over from the theoretical to the practical side.

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A Tenement in Soho. By GEORGE THOMAS. With an Introduction by JOHN OXENHAM. Cape. 7s. 6d.

This is a diary of four walls. Its author, at the age of twenty-seven, is confined by progressive muscular atrophy to a chair in an upper room of Berwick Street, overlooking the market. Three other members of the family—the mother, a sister and a brother—are crippled by the same disease. Hopelessness or resignation and an appalling monotony might seem to be the conditions of such existence, or perhaps the enforced cheerfulness one sees in the faces of a blind man and his companion bouncing arm-in-arm along the road. This diary gives instead the impression of a quiet active independence and a particular delight in things—the dusty sunlight, a bang overhead, or steps in the street—which most people miss. Although in a mood of despondency he exclaims that he could never commit suicide because life is not worth the taking, the opposite is true for him: he prizes the very fibre of living. Books, flowers, music, a friend's visit excite him continually. When the wireless is out of order and there is no money to put it right, it is as though the lights had suddenly failed; and the first experience of a talkie (one of his rare and difficult excursions) delights and thrills. Or perhaps, on a fine afternoon, he has sat at the window and seen staring up at him from the corner of a dustman's box the melancholy face of a cod; it has given him a pained look, reminding him of someone, and then gone. Small incidents like this, humorously recalled, make up the jog-trot of the diary: the important things are the day-to-day doings of the family, his studies, his musical compositions, a long-planned visit to a friend in the country, and the threat that they will all be turned out of the house, which the authorities have already condemned. It is a story of fine courage in the face of poverty and helpless illness; but what gives the book its individual temper is the author's detachment and faintly quixotic humour. It is a realistic book and also a very intimate one. Not many writers can write largely about themselves without self-pity or display of some sort; but Mr. Thomas is guilty of neither. His book ought to be painful to read, and so in a sense it is, but delight continually intervenes.

SHORTER NOTICES

Wall Street and Lombard Street. By FRANCIS W. HIRST. Macmillan. 8s. 6d.

Mr. Hirst was in the United States at the time of the Stock market collapse of 1929; and here he sets down a graphic account of the development from day to day during those disastrous months, illustrating his story with telling quotations from American newspapers and from the contemporary utterances of politicians and business men. These descriptive chapters are by far the best part of his book. From them he goes on to discuss the causes of the slump in America and in the rest of the world, and to propound possible remedies. But neither upon causes nor upon remedies has Mr. Hirst anything fresh to say. He reiterates his demand for economy and his hatred of tariffs. He points to the absurdities of the war debt and reparations settlements, and calls for a reconsideration of international obligations. He shows the evil effects of attempts artificially to keep up the prices of particular commodities by restricting the supply. And he has a little—a very little—to say of the monetary sources of our troubles. But all these points are treated but sketchily and in passing; and such value as the book has it owes to its description of the phases of the Wall Street collapse.

Divided Europe. By SOMERSET DE CHAIR. Cape. 5s.

This panorama of the political landscape includes a specially clear vision of the forces at work in Germany, Italy and Hungary and of the need to remodel the economic structure of Western civilisation to attain "the happy medium between the clumsy elephantiasis of our present capitalist organisation and the inhuman machine of collective control." The League of Nations is paralysed, Mr. de Chair affirms, by the inherent conflict between static and dynamic viewpoints. Great Britain therefore must cut adrift from a Europe to which she is psychologically ill-adapted, and cultivate, though indeed on modern co-operative lines, her Commonwealth garden. How this country is going to be cured so promptly of what Mr. de Chair as an erstwhile Empire Crusader might have been tempted to call her [Cobden and] Bright's disease is not explained. Then, Europe will have the choice of economic federation or vassaldom to the United States. Her co-ordination is envisaged here, not indeed on the lines laid down by the Quai D'Orsay, but on the basis of a Danubian Federation, the ground-plan for which, apparently, Mr. de Chair discerns in Czechoslovak policy. The author moves among the political problems of a distracted world with a debonair freedom of gait which is to be envied.

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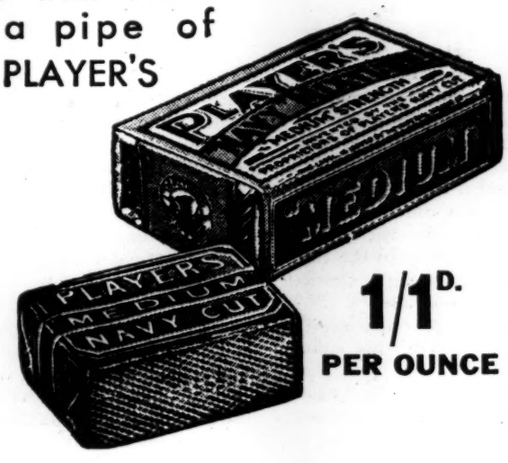

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A Guide to the Study of Mediæval History. By LOUIS JOHN PAETOW. Kegan Paul. 21s.

The members of the Mediæval Academy of America are very much to be congratulated on having revised and completed Professor Paetow's great "Who's Who" of mediævalists and their works. This is an invaluable and monumental work which no library, no school, no college or university can possibly do without, which will prove an endless saving of needless research and labour to every teacher and every scholar, no less than to all those who are engaged in studying, or are even interested in, the Middle Ages. This book appeared in 1917 in a limited edition, which quickly went out of print. The new edition, in one volume of a very reasonable size and price, fills a long-felt gap. It is an exhaustive index to all books on any subject connected with the Middle Ages published up to 1928.

Latin with Laughter. By Mrs. SYDNEY FRANKENBURG. Heinemann. 2s. 6d.

This book is an endeavour to help the inexperienced to prepare small children "in a leisurely way for a discipline which, if met for the first time at a preparatory school, will be to most of them dull and to many disheartening." The watchful parent is bidden to discover for herself what pronunciation is affected by the particular school she intends for her young, and she is to read aloud and encourage the child to find for itself simple English words derived from the Latin. No child need now doubt, as Henry Fairchild did, his father's (or mother's) capacity to teach, and his own to learn, the lessons at the end of the book. But though the idea of making Latin interesting is wholly good, the desire to make it funny seems unnecessary and irrelevant. Since this is a book for those under seven, must they be forced both to grasp and to laugh at pictures and exercises in which a nightingale pricked by a thorn sings to the moon, a poet sings to the nightingale, and the moon gazes at poet, nightingale, rose and thorn? Surely a picture of Jack and the Beanstalk would be more suitable, and more comprehensible?

Five Score: A Group of Famous Centenarians. By W. FORBES GRAY. Murray. 12s.

The Centenarians, of whom Mr. Gray has given us a series of swift character sketches, include John Leslie, Bishop of Raphoe; Charles Macklin, the actor and dramatist; Sir Richard Bulstrode, diplomatist and essayist; Sir Moses Montefiore, philanthropist; Manuel Garcia, the inventor of the laryngoscope; Mrs. Haldane, mother of the late Lord Haldane; and the Honble. Katherine Plunket, daughter of the Bishop of Tuam. Mr. Gray deals especially with the temperaments and manner of life of his subjects with a view to ascertaining what enabled them to attain their great ages. It may be doubted, however, if there is anything recorded that might not have been reported of septuagenarians. From the fierce old fighting Bishop to the benevolent philanthropist, from the quarrelsome actor to the courteous old scholar, from the energetic Garcia, who defied old age, to Bulstrode, who anatomised and praised it, what have they in common? One fact, however, seems to emerge, which is that on attaining their century, they seem to have given up, as if the goal had been reached.

The Archæology of Somerset. By D. P. DOBSON. Methuen. 10s. 6d.

Somerset is particularly rich in archæological material, much of which is common to many English counties; but readers of the earlier volumes in this series will find that if there is repetition it is repetition with a difference. The caves for which the country is famous provide much curious information. We find that their animal denizens were displaced by palæolithic man, and then, much later, that they formed the residences or refuges of quite advanced cultures. The lake dwellings of the country provide arresting studies of pre-Roman Britain, for they were the seats of cultures in which all the manual arts flourished, and in which civilisation had advanced so far that among a collection of dice there was found one die with two sixes! In Somerset there is a peculiar hiatus between the palæolithic cultures and the latest neolithic, which seems to indicate that for a long period the land was denuded of inhabitants. Stories of the lake-villages, the megalith builders, and the cave-dwellers are among the best pages in this interesting book.

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About Motoring

FOUR CARS TO SEE AT OLYMPIA

HERE is a small mixed grill of four interesting cars worthy of special attention at Olympia. The first is the much heralded Rover Scarab, a tiny four-seater with 7 h.p. air-cooled engine, catalogued at no more than £89. This bald announcement rather suggests that the car is a makeshift attempt to undercut the price of the £100 Morris, but actually it is entirely roadworthy, and should make comfortable motoring possible for many people who just cannot manage the outlay demanded by a water-cooled 7 h.p. four cylinder. Air-cooling is at last coming into its own where cheap cars are concerned. Curiously enough, its main drawback is not a risk of overheating as a novice might assume. Last month I watched an air-cooled B.S.A. romp up the fifteen mile ascent of the Stelvio Pass, overtaking many expensive water-cooled cars, which had stopped to replenish with water. The prime objection to air-cooling is that the engine is apt to be noisy, because there is no cushion of water round the cylinder to damp sound. On the Scarab this possibility has been efficiently tackled, and, as the engine is situated at the rear of the car, such noise as survives passes away to the rear, and is not noticed by the occupants. Since the engine and transmission are located in the tail they occupy a minimum space in the wheelbase, and there is ample room for four adults. All four wheels are separately sprung, and the comfort is exceptional. The fuel consumption is rather better than 50 miles to the gallon, and the car can be heartily recommended at the price.

Simultaneously the B.S.A. people are producing a four-wheeled version of their popular three-wheeler, which also has an air-cooled engine. The engine is mounted at the front, and, as the angle between the cylinders is 90 degrees, the balance is admirable. The car is quite fast, being capable of about 55 miles an hour, and it is priced at £115 for the two-seater *de luxe*.

In a different category stands the new three-litre Lagonda. The Lagondas enjoy a reputation amongst sporting owners second only to the Bentley cars, and the new model is unique in incorporating a German pre-selector gear box, built under the Maybach patents. So far as driving experience goes, the control of this gear box closely resembles that of the Wilson pre-selector, familiar in this country on Daimler and Armstrong-Siddeley chassis. The gears are "pre-selected" by levers on the steering wheel, and the "executive control," as with the Wilson, takes the form of tapping the clutch pedal. The Maybach patent, however, provides a further refinement in that it embodies two different series of four forward gears apiece. Actually, each forward series is completed by two reverse gears, so that the

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The time-honoured custom of sending good wishes to one's friends all over the world was still growing, and the Christmas and New Year Card Department had again shown remarkable progress. This department stood firm, and its growth and popularity were more than maintained. The book department, with which he had been personally associated for so many years, gave strong evidence of a fresh and alert vitality in its new publications. "Tuck's Annual," with its remarkable addition of realistic surprise panoramas and "Come to life" pictures, which charmed the minds of boys and girls, was taking the foremost place which it deserved.

The company's range of calendars continued to grow apace. The outstanding calendar of the year was a splendid reproduction of a painting of His Majesty the King, by J. A. A. Berrie, which was exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1931. It was finely reproduced in its original colours, and was a veritable little oil painting. On the cover of every date pad was printed the following message from His Majesty to his people: "I believe that those who have faith in the future of our nation will not be disappointed, and will reap the full reward of their foresight." This would be "The Gift Calendar of the Season." The pictorial advertising department continued in a sound, healthy, and progressive condition, and he had an important announcement to make, namely, the inauguration some three weeks ago of a complete Advertising Agency under the name of "The Raphael Tuck Advertising Agency."

The Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, in a public statement on the 17th of last month, had dwelt upon the importance of wise spending and wise economy, pointing out that it was the duty of private citizens and employers of labour to maintain as far as possible the ordinary employment which they gave to labour. The policy of this company had been to maintain their staff, and this policy would be continued as far as they possibly could.

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driver actually has a choice of twelve gears in all, eight forward and four reverse. The additional reverse gears serve no useful purpose, and the car would be more fairly described as an eight-speeded vehicle. These eight gears are of real value. In easy country the driver enjoys the benefits of what is generally known as a "close ratio" box, with which he can better 70 m.p.h. on third, and 80 m.p.h. on fourth. In a foreign tour he would employ this higher series of gears until he reached the Swiss frontier. On entering a mountainous region he would switch over to the lower series, and they would suit the Alps far better than any sports gear box. At home, by using the fourth gear in the high series he can drift along with a saloon body at high speed with an inaudible engine on minimum fuel consumption. Naturally, the gear controls are slightly more complicated than with the Wilson box. Two stumpy levers on the hub of the steering wheel give control to the higher speeds, and there is a normal gear lever which attends to reverse and the lower forward gears. The pre-selector mechanism is operated by suction from the engine through over-running clutches, and the mechanism weighs more than the Wilson device.

The fourth car is the new Hillman Minx, which bears a strong family resemblance to the Wizard, and is the cheapest 10 h.p. saloon on the market; it is priced at £155. Taxed at £10, it is handsome and roomy, with nothing freakish in its design. The fact that it has only three gears must be taken into consideration in contrasting the value offered by its rivals. The owner who dislikes gear changing will prefer this feature, but on crowded roads acceleration is a great asset, and personally I regard a four-speed box as indispensable to road comfort, and desirable for safety except to the kind of driver who can settle down peaceably in rather a slow traffic queue. The body space is remarkable. The rear cockpit has the all-too-common wells in the flooring, on each side of the propeller shaft tunnel. But the other provisions for seating are amazing. The interior height of the saloon is 4ft. The back seat is 50in. across, the front seat is 45½ inches, and the leg room is ample. Moreover, the vehicle handles like a large car, thanks to good springing, precise steering, and a pleasant freedom from roll. The Wizard has sold well since its introduction, but its small sister should sell even better; and the agents are tumbling over each other to secure Hillman representation for 1932. I hope that a naked chassis will be staged at Olympia, as there is great virtue in the stiffness of the unusually well-braced frame, and the rigidity of the engine and transmission assembly.

It should be understood that with the aid of recent "mergers" the Hillman cars are now manufactured on the grand scale and with the aid of the latest appliances. Their saloon bodies are all of pressed steel. The new fashion for giving every car a name has caused this new Hillman to appear as the Minx, and it is certainly an impudent *débutante* at the price.

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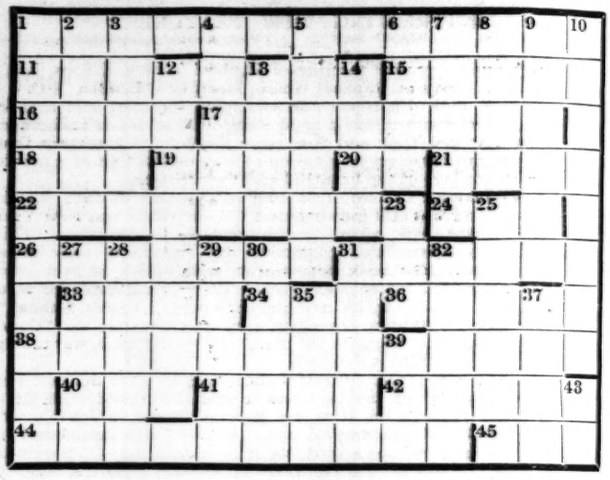

PEER'S RIB, HELEN?

ACROSS.

1. What do you make of this week's title?
11. By any other name I'm just as strong.
15. Crooked strait.
16 *rev.* On me the wailing died away.
17. My style would hardly suit Miss Stein.
18. A goalless match.
19. The Laureate seeks pastures new.
20. By Mr. Galsworthy.
21. They made me long for Southend.
22. Mine is the primrose path of evening.
24. Uncle Remus knew my baby.
26. I'm not all here.
31. French saying, somewhat confused.
33. Now get into hot water.
34 *rev.* One French king in three.
36. Island of much controversy.
38. Look for us in the Old Kent Road.
40. Beginning of Mistinguett's career.
41 *rev.* For her sake, the roses were awake all night.
42. Colour taken from an estuary.
44. Shaw gave me power.
45 *rev.* Alphabetically penultimate.

DOWN.

1. What use is this sort of question?
2. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange.
3. Trim, dicky.
4. You should try and make speeches with this.
5. Hiawatha's habitation overturned.
6. Of the stars; what is real is not there.
7. The ghost of Hamlet's father did not find Hamlet this.
8. Only half a complaint.
9. Is this the formation of Plymouth rocks?
10. The lecture-room knows him no more.
12. A spiral in stone.
13. I doubt if this would strike you favourably.
14. Aim of the French revolutionaries.
23. You'll find me in France, too.
25 *rev.* Scene of a Wellingtonian campaign.
27. The name of a magazine supplies a clue.
28. Legislation was simpler in my day.
29. Deals, shuffled afterwards.
30 *rev.* Once the capital of a state.
31. I introduce the rose to the nose.
32. Pup and mum make a formidable combination.
35. He looked for truth in the wine-cup.
37 *rev.* I'm not free at the moment.
39. I must be cracked.
43. A tear? I haste away.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS.—1. unemployment. 13. Nice. 14. oil. 16. Nat. 17. ero (ore). 18. Ich (dien). 19. ne. 20. (ba)boon. 21. Alec (oela). 22. p(O.K.)e. 23. otte(r)=Tark(a). 24. budget. 25. gladrag(s). 28. (p)ai(n). 29. ash *rev.* 31. Ill(inois). 32. oar. 33. mete *rev.* 35. L.G. *rev.* 36. nous *rev.* 38. Celt *rev.* 40. Erin. 41. Tories. 42. Tamaris(k). 45. Scipio. 49. opera. 51. Rt. (Hon.) 52. Conservatives.

DOWN.—1. Unionists. 2. Nick (two meanings). 3. echo. 4. mental. 5. poet. 6. Liberals. 7. ynoug (Young). 8. mandate. 9. Reigate *rev.* 10. Helen *rev.* (the face that launched 1,000 ships). 11. tret. 12. Socialists. 15. lobar. 25. giuoco (piano)=an opening at chess. 26. roll *rev.* (Master of the Rolls). 27. (anti)dote. 30. rings *rev.* 33. apace *rev.* 34. rim *rev.* 37. nips. 39. vote *rev.* 43. Met. 44. ira *rev.* 46. in. 47. (m)ie(l). 48. or (Heraldic gold). 50. A.V

BRIDGE

WHAT ARE FORCING BIDS?

In answer to several inquiries, I should like to clear up the question as to what bids at Contract are definitely *forcing*. What bids, that is to say, *compel* a response, in the absence of an intervening bid by the adversary?

The following is the answer:

(1) An initial bid of two *in a suit*.
(2) A "jump" take-out *in a suit not previously bid*.
(3) An immediate overbid of the adversary's suit.
(4) An informatory double.

The following are *not* forcing bids; though in each case they indicate strength:

(1) An initial bid of *Two No Trumps*.
(2) A "jump" raise in the suit bid by one's partner.
(3) A bid of, say, Two Spades over the adversary's bid of One Heart.

Misunderstanding as to these three bids is a frequent source of error.

CALIBAN.

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All at 2.30 p.m., unless otherwise stated.

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ALDWYCH. TURKEY TIME. Wed. & Fri.

APOLLO. THERE'S ALWAYS JULIET. Th. & S.

CAMBRIDGE. ELIZABETH of ENGLAND. Th., S.

DUKE OF YORK'S. SALOME. Th., Sat., 2.40.

GLOBE. THE IMPROPER DUCHESS. Wed. & Sat.

HIPPODROME. Wed. & Sat.
STAND UP AND SING.

LYRIC. AUTUMN CROCUS. Wed. & Sat.

QUEEN'S. BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE ST. W. & S.

ROYALTY. The IMMORTAL LADY. Th., Sat., 2.40.

STRAND. COUNSEL'S OPINION. Th. & Sat.

WESTMINSTER. THE ANATOMIST. W., S.

WYNDHAM'S. Wed., Thurs.
THE CASE OF THE FRIGHTENED LADY.

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A play by VICKI BAUM.
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Mary Brough and RALPH LYNN.

APOLLO. Ger. 6970. Evgs., 8.30. Th., Sat., 2.30.
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A Comedy, by JOHN VAN DRUTEN.
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PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY and
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A Modern Comedy by JAMES B. FAGAN.

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STAND UP AND SING.

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FAY COMPTON, Francis Lederer, in
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A Lecture on "ANDREW LANG AND THE MAID OF FRANCE" will be given (in English) by MONSIEUR LE PROFESSEUR L. CAZAMIAN (Professor of English Literature and Civilisation in the University of Paris (Sorbonne) at BEDFORD COLLEGE, LONDON (Regent's Park, N.W.1) on MONDAY, OCTOBER 26th, at 5.15 p.m. The Chair will be taken by Professor Lascelles Abercrombie, Litt.D., M.A. (Hildred Carlile, Professor of English Literature in the University).
ADMISSION FREE, WITHOUT TICKET.
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CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.—Sunday, October 25th, at 11 a.m
WM. STEPHEN SANDERS, M.P.
CAN WE SOLVE THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC PROBLEM?

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE, 55, Gower Street, W.C.1.
Thursday, October 29th at 8.30 p.m.
LECTURE: The Unconscious in Forms of Government, by Mr. D. Mitrinovic.

WEDNESDAY, October 28th, 8 p.m., Essex (Small) Hall, Essex Street, Strand. Under the auspices of the "X" Society. MISS ALICE RAVEN. "The Psychology of the Criminal." Supported by distinguished Alienists and Lawyers. Free.

MRS. DORA (COUNTESS) RUSSELL will speak on "Free Thought for Women and Children," at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, W.C. next Tuesday (Election Night), 7 p.m. Admission free.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THE FUTURE OF THE POUND—A FRENCH MANŒUVRE?—THE INDUSTRIAL SHARE BOOMLET—JAPANESE BONDS

At the risk of offending the few decent-minded people who read a financial page in the middle of an indecent election I will return to the pound. The future of the pound sterling is the only question worth discussing at the present time—and it is not one fit to be discussed by the election-mongers. The City Editor of the *Times* and many other politicians would have us believe that we were forced off the gold standard because, after we had restored the pound in April, 1925, to its pre-war gold parity, we embarked upon a policy of lavish social services culminating in an extravagant dole to the unemployed. Now if it were true that we were maintaining a standard of life that we could not permanently afford—even if our industries were efficiently organised and managed—we might have been forced off the gold standard in the autumn of 1932, provided the world trade depression had not lifted by that time, but it is impossible to argue that this was the cause of our being pushed of suddenly and rudely in September, 1931. The City knows perfectly well that the immobilisation of British advances to Germany at a time when foreigners, *lacking confidence in their own position*, were seeking to repatriate balances from the most active financial centre, London, was the immediate cause of the sterling exchange crisis. The Westminster Bank, in its last *Review*, fairly expressed the City view in the following words: "Admittedly her (Britain's) previous financial and industrial policy had not been without flaw, but in the light of the events of this summer it is difficult to believe that this fact exercised more than a limited contributory influence in the ultimate result. The crisis grew out of the distrust by many nations of their own position . . . and in consequence it is an open question whether the pound sterling could have been saved, even had the internal policy of Great Britain been conducted with the wisdom of Diogenes, the statesmanship of Pericles and the strength of Cæsar."

* * *

Our next problem, now that we have been pushed off the gold standard, is to see that we are not pushed back again. There is an immediate danger of the pound sterling being forced up to its gold parity—if not by a flight from the dollar, then by a mass manœuvre of French balances. If the National Government is returned to power by a sweeping majority, and proceeds to install a protective tariff system, it is pretty certain that there will be a steady flow of French money to London. Bank rate may be lowered from its present preposterous level of six per cent., but that will not suffice to stem the tide of the French monetary invasion. The excuse will be the return of confidence in British finances. The real motive will be to push the pound sterling back to 124.21 francs in order to save the French export trade from ruin and to cancel the losses on the existing French balances in London. It must not be forgotten that with the pound at 98 francs the Bank of France has an exchange loss on its sterling balances greater than the total of its paid-up capital and visible reserves. We ought to be prepared to resist this clever monetary manœuvre of the French bankers, but I confess that the reports of an agreement between the Bank of France and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York add to my fears. It is said that the Bank of France is prepared to support the dollar provided the American banks will increase the rates payable on foreign deposits. But what is to prevent a French purchase of dollars and the subsequent use of these dollars for a purchase of sterling? M. Laval may only discuss with President Hoover German reparations, European war debts and disarmament, but the French financial experts will be devilishly busy in the anterooms. The tragedy of it all is that while ingenious schemes are perhaps being hatched by foreign bankers to attack the trade defences of this country, we go electioneering, crying the shibboleths of tariffs and Empire Free Trade, and invoking the absent 14,000,000 cows which ought to be grazing on British farms. If only the cows would drive out the asses which now find pasturage in this pleasant land, I would more readily think of them than of the French "bulls" of sterling.

* * *

Really we ought to stop talk of stabilising the pound at four dollars, or 3.86 dollars or any other level. This view has been expressed to me by an international business man whose word carries great weight both in London and on the Continent. As a foreigner he knows how foreign traders would look at any hasty stabilisation of the pound sterling. It would be said that if Great Britain chose to devalue her currency from 4.86 to, say, 3.86 dollars in 1931, she might choose to devalue it again in 1932 or 1933—perhaps from 3.86 to 3.00 dollars. The foreigner would begin to lose his confidence in British honesty if a National Government, fresh from its victory at the hustings, proceeded to play tricks with the pound sterling. He does not blame Great Britain for being pushed off the gold standard by the exigencies of an international banking crisis, but he would be shocked at the British Government *initiating* a devaluation scheme. There is a great deal of force in this view to which I am glad to give some publicity. Clearly we are more likely to get back our leadership in international finance and trade if we can show the foreigner that international business can proceed quite smoothly on a sterling basis irrespective of the gold standard. It would certainly weaken our position if we made approaches to the gold-standard countries for a conference at this moment. They pushed us off gold and must discover for themselves that they made a costly mistake. For us to summon an international conference would have been wise while we were still clinging to the gold standard, as this journal advocated, but we must now wait until we are begged by the gold hoarders to attend and lend our aid.

* * *

The exaggerated rise in British industrial shares should now convince the Stock Exchange Committee that they made a mistake in restricting dealings to a cash basis. I have always argued that speculation on the "short" tack, if allowed, would prevent an unhealthy boom in equity shares. What has happened in the forced absence of "short" selling is that the stream of small buying orders into the industrial share markets has precipitated a rise in share values out of all proportion to the volume of business. Dealers have been short of stock and not being able to match spot purchases with forward sales, have marked up prices sharply in a vain attempt to induce holders to sell. But no one will sell, for the election prospects are read in a very "bullish" light. The extent of the rise in representative shares is shown in the following table. The columns giving the last year's earnings and present dividends may afford some test of its reasonableness.

	Prices.		Increase	Last Year. Earnings	Dividends
	Sept. 19.	Oct. 21.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
Vickers, 6/8	7/3	10/–	37.9	11.3	8% (1930)
Powell Duffryn Steam Coal, £1	5/–	9/3	85.0	nil	nil
Bleachers, £1	7/–	16/–	128.6	nil	nil
Calico Printers, £1	5/6	12/–	116.1	nil	nil
Courtaulds, £1	28/–	41/3	47.3	7.8	2% int. agst. 3%
Imperial Chemical, £1 ..	10/4½	17/7½xd	71.9	6.9	1½% int. agst. 3%
Turner & Newall, £1 ..	23/–	32/–	39.1	17.2	2½% int. agst. 5%
Cables and Wireless 5½% pref. stk.	40	65	62.5	5.5	Int. passed
L. and N.E. Rly. pref. ord.	7	17	142.9	nil	¼% 1930

It is obvious that even if we are to retain a good part of the advantages which we originally secured by being the "first off gold," the market has gone ahead of earnings prospects.

* * *

As creditor countries need not be forced off the gold standard unless there is an illiquid short-term loan position, there is no immediate reason why Japan should follow Great Britain and Sweden. Foreign balances in Tokyo are practically non-existent. In spite of the drop in foreign trade, Japan is officially declared to have had a surplus on her international account in the first nine months of 1931. That the new tariffs in India, the boycott in China and the competition of British textiles and other goods selling on a depreciated sterling basis may force Japan off the gold standard before long is, however, very probable. The fall in Japanese bonds is really attributable to the Manchurian crisis and a recovery should be seen as soon as this dispute is settled by the League. The extent of the fall is seen in the following table:

	Price on September 20.	Price on October 22.
Japan 4%, 1899	71	59
" 5%, 1907	85	74½
" 4%, 1910	68	56
" 6%, 1924	100½	87
Tokyo City, 5½%	94	78
Japan 5½%, 1930 Concessions	97¾	104½

It will be seen that Japanese sterling bonds are now on a 7 per cent. yield basis, except the 5½ per cent. Conversion Loan of 1930, which is different because it is on a gold basis.

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C. G. BURTON, Secretary.

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